

BING

SUMMER 2019
No. 182



THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

Founded in 1936, the world's longest-running fan club – as recognised by the
Guinness Book of World Records

Our Mission:

To perpetuate the memory
and the musical legacy
of Bing Crosby for
the benefit of future
generations



Membership

Membership renewals fall due on 1st January each year and subscription rates effective for 2019 are:

USA and Canada	US \$35 or C\$45 per annum
UK	£20 per annum
Mainland Europe, including Eire	£22 per annum
Australia and New Zealand	A\$50 per annum
Rest of the World	£23 per annum

All remittances should be sent to Michael Crampton in **£ sterling** payable to **The International Club Crosby** with the exception of:

- (a) American members who should pay F. B. Wiggins in US dollars
- (b) Canadian members who should pay Scott Payne in US or Canadian dollars
- (c) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars

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Club: www.club-crosby.org

BING Magazine: www.bingmagazine.co.uk

Bing Crosby Enterprises: www.BingCrosby.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Bing-Crosby/44544738326

Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Club_Crosby

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor or to the American Co-Editor.

Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should either be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer or to your local representative please.

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Magazine Editor

MALCOLM MACFARLANE

3 Osborne Close
Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 2EE, UK
Tel: 01625 528942
Email: macwilmslo@aol.com

Secretary and Treasurer

MICHAEL CRAMPTON

19 Carrholm Crescent
Chapel Allerton, Leeds LS7 2NL, UK
Tel: 0113 2689556
Email: mdcrampton@gmail.com

American Co-Editor

ANTON GARCIA-FERNANDEZ

133 Division Avenue
Jackson, Tennessee 38301, USA
Tel: (615) 8185159
Email: antongarciafdez@gmail.com

American / Canadian Representative

F.B. (Wig) WIGGINS

5608 North 34th Street
Arlington, Virginia 22207, USA
Tel/Fax: (703) 241-5608
Email: wigbing2012@gmail.com

Australian / New Zealand Representative

DAVID CURRINGTON

34A Geoffrey Street,
Turramurra, New South Wales
Australia 2074
Tel: (02) 9440 2434
Email: davecurro@tpg.com.au

Canadian Representative

SCOTT PAYNE

P.O. Box 387
Iroquois, Ontario K0E 1K0, Canada
Tel: (613) 222-1228
Email: overscores@gmail.com

CONTRIBUTORS

American Contributors:

David Lobosco, Martin McQuade, and Perry Huntoon who kindly deals with the distribution of the USA magazines

British Contributors:

J. Richard Baker / Ken Crossland / Jeremy Rose

Canadian Contributors:

Gord Atkinson / Lorne Harasen

Australian Contributor:

Graham Pascoe



Dear ICC Member

FUTURE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

As we complete our 83rd year dedicated to the preservation of Bing Crosby's memory and musical legacy, we face the need to review our club's future financial stability. In recent years, printing and distribution costs have risen and worldwide membership has steadily declined thus affecting the club's ability to continue its activities at current levels.

Experience with continually rising costs for BING magazine have already led your management team to negotiate a less expensive contract with a new printer, which will result in helpful savings now and in the future.

Nevertheless, our club will face future financial challenges at our current membership levels and subscription rates. This is despite the fact that a substantial number of members make additional contributions to our club above and beyond their membership subscriptions.

To ensure future financial stability, the management team is considering several options and these include:-

- (a) changing from 3 to 2 magazines per year (in spring and autumn) whilst retaining existing subscription rates.
- (b) adding a less expensive newsletter at mid-year along with the spring and autumn magazines whilst retaining existing subscription rates.
- (c) necessary increases in subscription rates to maintain 3 issues per year (in spring, summer and winter).

Before any changes are made, the management team would appreciate receiving members' comments regarding the most desirable way forward. Please share your views via telephone, letter or email with your local representative. Your comments will be greatly appreciated.

Wig Wiggins
Michael Crampton
David Currington
Scott Payne
Perry Huntoon
Malcolm Macfarlane
Anton Garcia-Fernandez

Editorial

This edition may have a slightly different look because we have changed our printer. Our previous printer, who, for historic reasons, was based in Durham (150 miles away from me), has done a great job for us over the years but having a printer just a mile from my home will be more practical. We should be able to get the magazine out more quickly and there should be some useful cost savings too. Let me know how you like the look of this issue.

The future frequency of the issue of magazine has now to be considered by you all and the enclosed insert sets out the possible options. Do please make the effort to give us your feelings on the matter.

The passing of Doris Day was a sad loss for us all and we examine her career in our *Once in a While* section. There's a particularly wide range of articles in this issue. Anton is back and Jeremy Rose returns to our pages too after a short absence with an in-depth look at Bing's 1957 children's records. It's nice to have an article from former BING editor John Bassett and all the regulars are here as usual.

Are we seeing the demise of the CD as streaming takes over? Richard Baker considers the situation as well as giving us details of some new CDs. Martin McQuade covers an interesting variety of subjects and Ken Crossland has some thoughts about the Bing & Satchmo album. David Lobosco has been looking at Bing's film *Just for You* and Graham Pascoe picks up some of the points from our last issue relating to the Australian scene. We nearly had some great news of rare videos and films in *Bing on the Box* but ultimately we were disappointed as you will read.

I shall be sending the winter edition of the magazine off to the printer on October 25 so please send in any contributions before that date. The earlier the better please.

Now here's Anton.

Malcolm Macfarlane

macwilmslo@aol.com

We enter the summer months (at least here in the northern hemisphere) and for this writer it means some welcome rest from the classes I teach every semester at the university. Now I finally have some time at my disposal to sit down, read books for pleasure, listen to music (Bing is always number one on the list of records spinning on my turntable or CD player), and watch baseball and the cricket world cup, an event that, I suspect, falls under the radar of quite a few of my fellow Americans.

As Malcolm has already mentioned, this summer is also a time of important decisions regarding the future of BING magazine, which is, indeed, the future of our club. Since the magazine serves as an indispensable means of communication and contact between all our members worldwide, I encourage everyone to take a serious look at the enclosed insert and provide



some feedback as to whatever necessary changes need to be made to the frequency of the magazine. Our intention is to secure the financial stability of the club for the foreseeable future, a goal that I am aware that all members share, and to that effect, all and any suggestions will be appreciated. The strength of a club always mirrors the degree of interest and involvement of its members, and it isn't for nothing that the ICC is recognized as the longest-running fan club in history. We have no doubt everyone will show their loyalty to Bing's memory by being quick and thorough in their responses to this highly relevant matter.

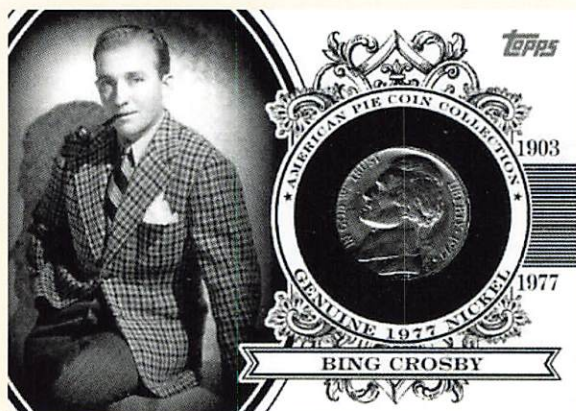
I recently had the pleasure of making two brief radio appearances, one on local radio here in Tennessee to celebrate the 77th anniversary of Bing's original recording of Irving Berlin's "White Christmas," and the other on a Spanish-language radio show honoring the life and career of Doris Day. Like many people of my generation, I first encountered Day as an actress, particularly via the films she made with Alfred Hitchcock. But I fell in love with her when I discovered her work as a jazz and pop singer, from her early years with Les Brown to later masterpieces such as her Duet album with noted pianist André Previn. To this day, and sadly, she remains one of the best, though most underrated vocalists who ever graced American music.

As always, I would like to thank all contributors to this issue for the depth and breadth of their pieces, which result in yet another very interesting magazine. As Malcolm states above, I am back as well, and my own contribution explores *Bing Sings the Great Country Hits*, a 1963/1965 LP that finds our man taking a stab at the then highly popular Nashville Sound style of country music. It is one of the most overlooked albums by Bing from the sixties, and it is my hope that this article will prompt some of our members to dust off their copies and rediscover the great stuff it has to offer. Happy summer and happy reading everyone!

Anton Garcia-Fernandez antongarciafdez@gmail.com

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Secretary / Treasurer's Report

Since the last issue of BING your management team have been exceptionally busy considering the financial future of the ICC. We have moved to a new printer and this should result in worthwhile savings. We have reviewed our postal arrangements and again some savings have been achieved as a result of rearranging the distribution of the magazine.



We are greatly indebted to our long time printer Gary Henderson who provided an excellent service to us for over 30 years and we only move on because of the need to make savings as our membership declines and costs inflate.

Your management team believe that we are at a financial crossroads and that we must take a decision soon about how we provide a service to members in the years ahead. To this end, all members will have received an insert in which we invite you to express your views about the club's future and I urge all to contact your local representative to give your views and opinions.

Notwithstanding the above I am delighted to report that members continue to be exceptionally generous with their donations and the worthy members listed below have contributed over £1600 to help maintain a healthy balance for 2019. I will report on members' response to the insert and prospects for 2020 in the winter edition of BING.

New Members

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members with a sincere wish that they will derive much interest and enjoyment from their membership of the club.

UNITED STATES

May Mazzola (Brooklyn, New York - to whom we owe a sincere apology for missing her entry in the last issue of the magazine), Tom Miller (Superior, Wisconsin), Mike Plasket (Belle Vue, Pennsylvania), Jack Cleveland (Selbyville, Delaware), Stan Leland (New York, New York), Terry Haines (Alexandria, Virginia).

UNITED KINGDOM

Carole Rimmer (Southport, Lancashire)

Donations

Members' generous support for the ICC continues and we are indebted to the members listed for their exceptional gifts without which three issues of BING would not be possible.

AUSTRIA

Thomas Hirschmann

IRELAND

Gerard Hanlon, Derek Perkins

UNITED KINGDOM

Nicholas Morrison, Ken Heason, Michael Portley, Jason Liddiard, John Walton, Bert Hamblet, Michael J. Reynolds

UNITED STATES

Howard Crosby, Marq Stankowski, Ron Field, Anthony Diflorio, Lee Cook, Maureen Bradley, Joseph Clay, Milton Cummings, David Currie, Stanley Diebel, Karen Dornbush, Laurence Doyle, Robert Ferguson, David Foe, William Fowler, William Franklin, Jeff Freeman, Clarence Haege, Terry Haines, John Holland, William Hunt, Zane Johnson, Sean Joyce, Michael Keiser, Laurence Kieran, David Lobosco, Ralph Morris, Paul Murphy, Edward Press, Ronald Reichard, Mike Reilly, Dave Richards, Rev Eugene Roberts, Gregg Russo, Dick Ryan, Judy Schmid, Richard Shoemaker, Dale Thielker, Phillip Turfle, Greg Van Beek, Elisa Van Riper, John Wharton, Ben Whiteley

Bing Crosby on CD

This is my usual reminder that the following single CDs remain available from me.

Costs as follows:

UK	£7.50
Europe	£9.50
Rest of the world	£10.50

The price for the double CD is:

UK	£9.50
Ireland & Europe	£11.50
Rest of the world	£15

Members in the US and Canada should obtain their copies from Wig Wiggins and in Australia/New Zealand from David Currington.

- **BING CROSBY – THROUGH THE YEARS – Vols. 8, 9 and 10**
- **BING CROSBY and the Kraft Music Hall – Rare Original Survivors**
- **BING CROSBY – GOOD AND RARE VOL 3.**
- **JOIN BING & SING ALONG (2 CD SET)**

Until next time, my warmest greetings to all members.

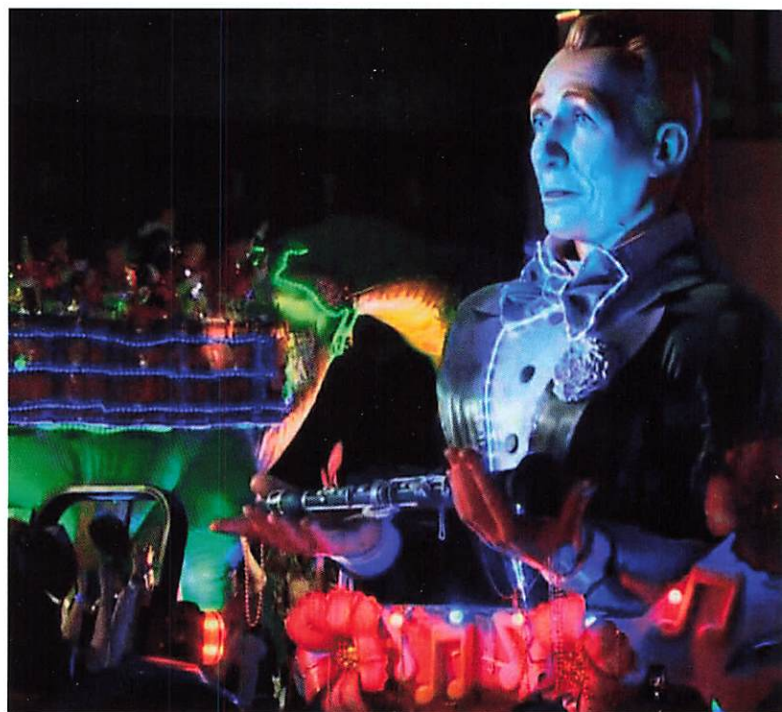
Michael Crampton

mdcrampton@gmail.com

Bing at the Mardi Gras

As you know, the holiday of **Mardi Gras** is celebrated in all of Louisiana, including the city of New Orleans, for about two weeks before and through Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday. The largest and most elaborate parades take place the last five days of the Mardi Gras season and this year one of the floats featured Bing's film *The Birth of the Blues*. Appropriately, a large image of Bing was on the front of the float holding a clarinet. It was very pleasing indeed to see this. To view a video of it, go to:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=295226567818244>



Syracuse Cinephile's 2019 Spring Movies

The Syracuse Cinephile Society in New York continued its 52nd consecutive year of film screenings with a 14-week spring season of classic movies beginning on March 18.

This season the Monday night series paid tribute to actress, singer and former child star Gloria Jean, who passed away on August 31. Although she was living in California, Gloria learned of the Syracuse Cinephile Society and became an enthusiastic advocate, speaking of the organization and its events to friends and fellow performers. On April 1st the Cinephiles duly screened 1940's *If I Had My Way*, one of Gloria's best musicals, in which she starred with Bing.

Well done to the Cinephiles!

Going My Way in Warrington, UK

Jason Liddiard reports on his branch meeting.

We greeted the spring with our best attended meeting to date! Thanks to everyone who made the effort, especially those who had to brave public transport during a weekend of numerous rail maintenance disruptions. Clearly, it takes more than rail 'improvements' to prevent indomitable Crosbyites from missing an opportunity to listen to our man alongside like-minded enthusiasts.

With the recent Sepia release still going round in my head, it seemed fitting to open our spring Bing fling, held Saturday, April 13th with *April in Portugal* from the Holiday in Europe session of 8th May, 1961 when Bing overdubbed his vocals to orchestral tracks previously laid down by Malcolm Lockyer. We continued to dip into the Sepia selection throughout our spring meeting.

Also sprinkled throughout the afternoon were other spring-themed tunes by Bing: 'Bing Sings Spring #1' being *April Showers* from April 1956, with the Jack Pleis Orchestra and Jud Conlon's Rhythmaires.

ICC member John Walton, making his first appearance at a Going My Way gathering, chose *Two Shadows on the Sand*, also from Holiday in Europe, for his request track. Hope to see you again soon, John!

I read out a couple of nice email messages from folks who could not attend for one reason or another: Mark Spry, who is planning a forthcoming house move and Graham Pascoe, ICC member based in Bathurst, Australia! Just as well you didn't try to get here, Graham, what with the rail disruptions and all!

We usually mention any radio Bing plays we might have heard since the last meeting, and I recounted that my own request for Bing's 1932 recording of *Sweet Georgia Brown*, with Isham Jones, was played on the long-running BBC R3 programme Jazz Record Requests. I can't be sure, but it seems we might have signed up a new UK member off the back of that one request. If so, this demonstrates the importance to the club of keeping Bing's voice on the airwaves of national radio.

I've recently been tuning in to Internet radio station Crooner Radio, where Bing songs through the years are frequently featured. For example, I'd recently heard his 1937 rendition of the Al Dubin – Harry Warren song *Remember Me?* On another occasion *I Got Rhythm*, the Gershwin brothers' tune recorded by Bing with the Pete Moore orchestra in 1975 was given a spin.

Clare Teal continues to sing Bing's praises on her Swing & Big Band Show (Sunday evenings, BBC R2). On her show of 31st March Clare devoted around twenty

minutes of the 'If it wasn't for this, we wouldn't have this...' spot, highlighting Bing's influences and those singers he himself subsequently influenced. It was a surprise to all of us to hear that the recently deceased Scott Walker was, according to Ms Teal, a big Bing fan!

'Bing Sings Spring #2' provided our first video clip: Bing singing the Johnny Burke – James Monaco song *April Played the Fiddle*, from the 1940 Bing movie *If I Had My Way*, which includes the vocal group Six Hits and a Miss in the background.

Of course, we covered the Sepia issue of Holiday in Europe (and Beyond!) in our 'News & Reviews' section of the meeting, playing a few sample tracks. How satisfying it is to have this long-awaited Bing release to slot in alongside the other Bing CDs on the shelf.

We were very lucky on the day to have professional singer John Walton with us. John explained how a singer typically warms up by reaching out as far as they can with their voice, then working back to find their range. This explains perfectly Bing's approach to the rehearsal track of *C'est Si Bon* from the Sepia album. Who would have thought that our quarterly get-togethers would prove to be such cultural and educational events!

After such a revelation we had to take a refreshment break, but not before a community rendition of *Happy Birthday to You*, sung to two of our lady attendees who had both celebrated birthdays in the days just before our meeting, although I'm not sure those of us singing had taken note of John's warm-up lesson...



The male attendees pose for the camera. (l to r: Jeremy Rose, Keith Richmond, Nicholas Morrison, John Walton, Michael Crampton, Jason Liddiard, Geoff Vizard and Malcolm Macfarlane)

Following a brief photo-shoot, we reconvened (taking Easter eggs and birthday cake with us) to watch a clip of André Previn on Bing's CBS TV show of November 1963, played in tribute to the pianist, composer, arranger and conductor who died earlier this year.

It was regular attendee Keith Richmond's turn to present his 'Crosby Dozen' this time, and what a superb and eclectic selection Keith chose, demonstrating

Bing's unique ability across many styles and many decades. Souvenir copies on CD were distributed and, I have to say, this makes for a truly enjoyable compilation. Thanks again, Keith!

Our film choice came courtesy of Malcolm Macfarlane who had managed to get a TCM recording from US ICC member Bob Grace of the elusive *Top o' the Morning*, a 1949 film produced by Bing Crosby Enterprises and released by Paramount. The amazing thing about this film is that it has never been shown in the UK since its original cinema release, meaning that, with the exception of attendee Geoff Vizard, we were all seeing it for the first time! (For more information, see David Lobosco's review in BING #181.)

So a wonderful finale to our spring Bing meeting. Now I can say that I've watched *Top o' the Morning* for the first time, just seventy years after its original cinema release!

Jason Liddiard

email: jkl@galleryjkl.com

(Editor: As always this was a very pleasant get-together which provided an excellent infusion of Crosbyana for those of us present. Keith Richmond's selection included the 1932 version of "St. Louis Blues" and Keith handed out a copy of the relevant sleeve notes from the Mosaic set "Duke Ellington: The Complete 1932-1940 Brunswick, Columbia and Master Recordings of Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra". I thought I'd share the notes with you as most of the information was new to me.

"Duke Ellington and Bing Crosby first shared a stage on August 21, 1930, at the Ambassador Hotel's Cocoanut Grove nightclub in Los Angeles. Ellington's orchestra, which was in Hollywood to film *Check and Double Check* at RKO, made a guest appearance where they played for an hour. The Cocoanut Grove's regular band, led by Gus Arnheim, featured vocals by the Rhythm Boys, one of whom was Bing Crosby. The studio brass were there (Carl Laemmle, Sr. & Jr.), the director of *Check and Double Check* (Melville Brown), the stars of the picture (Gosden and Correll) and its songwriters (Kalmar and Ruby) and also a host of celebrities, among them Loretta Young, Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle, Mack Sennett, Louise Brooks, Mervyn LeRoy and Skeets Gallagher.

The Rhythm Boys apparently made quite an impression on the studio folk, for they were hired to sing "Three Little Words" on the soundtrack of the film, and they also sang it on Ellington's Victor record. Shortly thereafter, Bing went out on his own and became the biggest singing sensation in the nation.

"St. Louis Blues", written by W.C. Handy in 1914, has been described as "the Jazzman's Hamlet." Happily, two very distinct takes of this classic performance survive, both wonderful, with the "A" take a bit more relaxed. This was a 12-inch record, which allowed for nearly four and one-half minutes of music as opposed to the three-minute length of a 10-inch record.")

What the UK Streamed in 2018

In April, The British Phonographic Industry (BPI) revealed the top streamed tracks in 2018 for every decade since the 1940s, and it was good to see that "White Christmas" by Bing was the top song for the first decade reviewed. Another Yuletide staple, "Rockin' around the Christmas Tree" by Brenda Lee, is the favourite from the 1950s, while the Jackson 5's "I Want You Back" is top of the pops among 1960s singles.

"Bohemian Rhapsody" by Queen is the 1970s winner and "Last Christmas" by Wham! follows for the 1980s. Mariah Carey edges out the likes of Oasis and the Spice Girls for the 1990s with "All I Want for Christmas Is You".

The top track for the 2000s is The Killers's "Mr Brightside", which still regularly makes the top 100 on the weekly Official Singles Chart despite being first released in 2003.

For the current decade so far, Bruno Mars has the most-streamed song with "Finesse". Last year saw more than 500 tracks released before 2017 played more than 10million times in the UK, figures showed.

The BPI said "While streaming data gives us a valuable verdict on which freshly-released tracks are the most popular, it also delivers important insight into what older music is currently resonating with the UK audience. This report attempts to ascertain how popular these older tracks are not only in relation to new music, but also what micro-trends are developing. The revival of interest in these catalogue tracks and albums reveals much not only what standing these classics have in our overall listening but also how we are (re)discovering and uncovering new gems from our rich musical heritage. Streaming continues to grow in popularity.

In 2018 over 90bn plays took place on audio streaming services, an increase of 33.5% on the 2017 total, and we are now regularly seeing 2bn streams per week occur. BPI's 2018 analysis looked at the 15,000 most-played tracks of the year and assigned a 'year of release' to each, corresponding to the first day it was made publicly available."

Richard Baker looks at the most popular streaming services in his *Keeping Track* article later in this issue.

Grace Kelly Letters

I was intrigued to see that Doyle in New York were mounting an auction of the estate of the late Oleg Cassini on June 27. Cassini was briefly engaged to Grace Kelly at one time and one of her letters to him on Hotel Bel-Air stationery mentions Bing. I thought you might like to read it.

Here's an extract from the catalogue:

Lot 5

KELLY, GRACE **Four autograph letters to** **Oleg Cassini**

...The Hollywood letters are undated but the letter headed "Monday" is likely chronologically first as it describes the plane flight out, being on a liquid diet, and arriving to roses from "Alma and Hitch" (being Alfred Hitchcock and during this period Kelly would star *Dial M For Murder*, *Rear Window* and *To Catch a Thief*). In the letter headed "Thursday night" Kelly is pleased to have received flowers from Cassini and even though "we are watching Charles Boyer on television – and as much as I love him I can only think of you." Kelly continues to report of the successful reviews of *Country Girl*, then in previews, and that "I should be able to see it in a few weeks." The letter closes with the statement "I think I'd rather have a ring instead of an automobile. I love you." But in the final, unsigned letter headed "Sunday," Kelly's tone drastically changes:

"Darling,

You have upset me so that I could die. I just don't understand your attitude. It is incredible to me that having dinner with Lizanne and the Crosbys can make you behave like a school boy – if I went out with Bing alone – you would be absolutely right – and I would never do that to begin with – because I have no interest in anyone but you – but this I shouldn't have to explain.

Bing is a wonderful person and a very dear friend. I have great respect for him and I hope he will be our friend for many years.

I told you he said he was in love with me — but there are many people that he feels that way about and after the emotional strain of playing *Country Girl* this was only natural. But Bing would never try to do anything about it — unless he thought I wanted it that way.

I have very few friends here — please don't ask me to give up their friendships."

(Sales catalog from Doyle, New York, for auction of Oleg Cassini estate June 27, 2019).

May 3, 1903

Bing's birthday this year was duly marked in the media in many ways. In Spokane, the Bing Crosby Advocates handed out 480 pieces of cake and informational flyers to Gonzaga students and employees as they walked by his statue. It only took 90 minutes to hand out the cake.



One item which appeared on Facebook was drawn to my attention by Lachlan McLean and was this superb painting by Marcelo Neira of Bing with Frank and Dean.



Marcelo Neira was born in Buenos Aires in 1963 and has lived there ever since. At one time, he worked as a painter for TV shows where he did portraits of the guests, sports celebrities, movie and TV stars. Now he usually does celebrity portraits and sells them directly to customers all over the world but he's also very pleased to do commissioned artworks. Apparently all you have to do is to send him the digital image you would like to be painted and he does his job. I have no idea how much he charges.

See: <https://www.marceloneira.com/>

Marcelo is a big Sinatra collector and is said to have the largest Ol' Blue Eyes collection of music and memorabilia in Argentina. He's been hosting a Sinatra radio show since 1995 on one of the main Argentinean radio stations.

Putting the Record Straight After 93 Years

Former BING editor, John Bassett, a collector extraordinaire, has been uncovering some facts surrounding Bing's first recording.

Having been a Crosby collector for more than half a century, I have found that one of the pleasures to be derived from the hobby is the discovery of items and recordings indirectly associated with Bing but nonetheless worthy of a place in the collection.

In this respect I put myself in the same category as Bob Roberts, the much admired and sadly missed collector who resided in Chatham, Kent. Bob was a household name when I joined the ICC in 1968 and he greatly influenced my approach to Crosby collecting. I vividly recall him showing me a nail that he had retrieved from the floor of a set being constructed for *The Road to Hong Kong* at Shepperton Studios. Such was his obsession with Crosbyana! I was particularly proud to have been the instigator of an entry relating to Bob's collection in the 1972 Guinness Book of Records. It saddens me to think that he never lived to hear Bing's final albums. It is not widely known that Bing's recording of "When I Leave the World Behind" was made at Bob's request when it was realised that his life expectancy was nearing its end.

But I digress. To return to the intended theme of this article, I consider myself extremely lucky to own a rare mint copy of US Columbia 790-D. Now before you all rush to your discographies, let me point out that this is not a Bing recording, although many serious collectors would pay a king's ransom for the opportunity to add this highly desirable 78 to their shelves.

The record in question is by Don Clark and his Los Angeles Biltmore Hotel Orchestra and the titles are "Just One More Kiss" and "When You Waltz with the One You Love". For those of you who are still puzzled by my obvious elation, allow me to explain that these were the two remaining titles supposedly recorded at the same session as "I've Got the Girl". I use the word "supposedly" because, having referred to a credible Columbia numerical listing, I see that we are awry with the previously stated dates given for these tracks.

In sleeve notes written back in August 1967, Miles Kreuger stated "On October 18, 1926, Bing and Al made their professional recording debut at the Los Angeles studios of Columbia Records. They sang a brief vocal on several selections, backed by Don Clark and his Los Angeles Biltmore Hotel Orchestra. The first title, "I've Got the Girl", was issued as 824-D". (My underlining)

With all due respect, and having the aforementioned listing at hand, I now present the relevant titles together with their correct dates, matrix numbers, Takes and vocalists, and it will be seen that some of the details differ from previously published information.



"Just One More Kiss" (W142782 Take 5). Recorded 12 October 1926 and issued on Columbia 790-D. Vocal by Betty Patrick.

"When You Waltz with the One You Love" (W142783 Take 3). Recorded 12 October 1926 and issued on Columbia 790-D. Vocal by Ernest Morrison.

"Idolizing" (W142784 Take 3). Recorded 15 October 1926 and issued on Columbia 824-D. Vocal by Betty Patrick (shown as "Tillie Clarke" on UK issue).

"I've Got the Girl" (W142785 Take 3). Recorded 18 October 1926 and issued on Columbia 824-D. Vocal by Bing Crosby and Al Rinker (label merely states "vocal chorus").

"Don't Somebody Need Somebody" (W142786 Take(s) unknown), Recorded 18 October 1926 (presumed). Unissued. Vocal by Bing Crosby and Al Rinker (presumed).

As a matter of interest, two months after Bing's recording debut, an artiste by the name of Charles Kaley entered the Columbia studio on 20 December and waxed a further version of "I've Got the Girl", and this was issued on 845-D with the matrix number W143202 Take 4. To date, this particular disc has eluded me but my collection does contain other recordings of the song made by Gene Austin and by George Olsen and his Music.

After repeatedly listening to the October 1926 sessions for what seems like a lifetime, it is my personal opinion that "I've Got the Girl" lacks the overall liveliness apparent in "Idolizing" and "Just One More Kiss", both of which are melodically stronger and less repetitive in their construction. Considerable credit must be given to Betty Patrick for her sparkling renditions of two very catchy songs. The remaining title, "When You Waltz with the One You Love", is of very little interest and hardly worth mentioning, unless you have a penchant for waltz-tempo recordings with lack-lustre vocals.

Now comes a revelation that has been staring us in the face for many years but has never been raised as a valid point.

If we are to be pedantic in our research, it is an indisputable fact that the disc we cherish of “I’ve Got the Girl” was not Bing’s first recording, for after all, we are looking at Take 3. What a scoop it would be to discover the unissued Takes 1 and 2 residing in some dusty vault, each complete, of course, with Bing and Al’s historic duetting. One can but dream!



The British version of Bing’s first issued recording.

In conclusion, I have at “Bingville” what is probably the only copy of “I’ve Got the Girl” that exists in the UK as a brown wax cylinder. I believe that one other copy is owned by a collector in the States. This valuable piece of memorabilia plays at 120 rpm and was manufactured for use on Edison phonograph machines. The reproduction replicates the sound of its 78 rpm equivalent and it takes pride of place amongst the rarities in the collection.

John Bassett

(Editor: Many thanks, John, for this in-depth research. “I’ve Got the Girl” was quite a popular song in 1926 with the Gene Austin version proving to be the most successful.

Apart from those mentioned by John, other recordings were made by Abe Lyman’s California Orchestra, Nick Lucas, Al Lentz & His Orchestra, The Bell Syncopators, The Goofus Five, The Caroliners, Salt & Pepper, The Harmonizers, The Romeo Dance Orchestra, The Frivolity Club Orchestra, John Sylvester & His Orchestra and Joe Candullo Everglades Orchestra to name a few.

The song was written by the prolific Walter Donaldson who was responsible for hits such as “At Sundown”, “Carolina in the Morning”, “Little White Lies”, “Love Me or Leave Me”, “Makin’ Whoopee”, “My Baby Just Cares for Me”, “My Blue Heaven”, “My Buddy”, “My Mammy”, “Yes Sir, That’s My Baby” and “You’re Driving Me Crazy”.

Gary Giddins described the “I’ve Got the Girl” session.



Clark gave them lead sheets for two tunes, asking them to work up a harmonized chorus on each. The material was undistinguished: “I’ve Got the Girl!,” a weak tune by Walter Donaldson, who later wrote some of their most important Whiteman records, and “Don’t Somebody Need Somebody,” a throwaway by Abe Lyman, the cowriter of “Mary Lou.” No major recording career got off to a more dismal start than Bing’s.

The session took place in a hastily converted warehouse at Six and Bixel, and was engineered electrically. Bing and Al had to sing into a megaphone-like mike built into the planks of the recording booth. The Lyman tune was abandoned when Bing and Al could make nothing of it, and Peggy Bernier, a vaudeville trouper with pretty eyes and long bangs, fared no better. For all the good it did the boys or Clark, “I’ve Got the Girl!” ought to have been junked, too. Singing into a horn for the first time, Bing and Al could not sustain the blend of their voices. As a result, their recorded chorus is dominated by Al’s higher voice, though it is moored by Bing’s weighty, more controlled timbre. They sing Rinker’s treatment of the nattering tune energetically, inserting a measure of scat at the first turnback and attempting a unison portamento that got away from them. The performance did not do justice to their act - but then again, it wasn’t meant to. Their names did not appear on the label, and their complicity was further disguised by an accident: the record—backed with another Clark performance, “Idolizing,” vocal by one Betty Patrick—was inadvertently released at a fast speed. Bing and Al sound like chipmunks.

(Gary Giddins, Bing Crosby, A Pocketful of Dreams, The Early Years, 1903-1940, page 146.)

Bing Meets the Nashville Sound: *Bing Crosby Sings the Great Country Hits*

Anton considers Bing's Country and Western album.

Unlike Frank Sinatra, who wasn't particularly interested in country music and who recorded almost no country songs during his tenure with Columbia in the 1940s, Bing Crosby was quick to recognize the selling potential of what at the time was known first as "hillbilly" and then as "country & western" music. A cursory look at Bing's Decca catalog from the '30s and '40s reveals that he cut dozens of country and country-flavored tunes, from singing cowboy classics like "The Last Round-Up" and "Deep in the Heart of Texas" to western swing perennials such as "Pistol Packin' Mama" (an excellent take on the Al Dexter mega-hit with the Andrews Sisters) and "San Antonio Rose," not to mention ersatz country of the caliber of Johnny Mercer's "I'm an Old Cowhand" or Cole Porter's "Don't Fence Me In." Attracted to all kinds of music as he always was, Bing felt very much at ease donning a ten-gallon hat and boots while crooning about heading for a last round-up or about the life of a cowhand among those tumbling tumbleweeds. Fortunately, thematic compilations such as Jasmine Records' *Cowboy Country Crosby Style* and *Another Ride in Cowboy Country* allow us to explore and enjoy that rich side of Bing's recorded legacy.

The sheer amount of Crosby's country recordings, as well as their quality and variety, has secured him a place as one of the main popularizers of a musical style that before World War II was often derided as unworthy of attention by serious popular music critics despite its commercial success in certain areas of the United States. Tony Bennett's excellent version of the Hank Williams ballad "Cold, Cold Heart" is often cited as one of the first country songs to cross over to the pop field, but the truth is that, by 1951, when Bennett covered the Williams number, Crosby had been having hits with country material for several years already, one of the biggest of which was the aforementioned "Pistol Packin' Mama," which Sinatra reportedly disliked having to sing each week on *Your Hit Parade*. Moreover, Bing featured many of these songs week after week on his extremely popular radio broadcasts, which further exposed them to a wider range of audiences who may never have come in contact with the versions by their original country performers.

Of course, by 1963, when Bing entered the studios at Capitol to work on a project that would become



known as *Bing Crosby Sings the Great Country Hits*, many things had changed for both country music and Crosby himself. The singer had become a mass-media icon with a career that was quickly nearing its fortieth year. He wasn't in need of producing number-one hits anymore and, after ending his long-term association with Decca in the 1950s, had been freelancing on a one-off basis with different record labels. As for country music—and in great part due to the exposure that Crosby himself had afforded it—it had become one of the major forces in the American recording industry, with country acts enjoying nationwide hits and even touring outside of the U.S. Yes, it's true that this bonanza had been threatened by the onslaught of rock'n'roll in the mid '50s, but the Nashville establishment had responded by modifying the feel and instrumentation of country records: out went all those hard-driving fiddles and steel guitars of the rowdier honky-tonk variety, and in came sweet string arrangements, pianos, and choirs. The new music, espoused by the likes of Jim Reeves, Eddy Arnold, Patsy Cline, Don Gibson, and just about everyone who was anyone in the Music City, came to be known as the Nashville Sound, and it succeeded in fighting off the threat posed first by rock'n'roll and soon thereafter by the British Invasion led by the Beatles. Anyone interested in this development within the country music of the '50s and '60s, by the way, should take a look at Paul Hemphill's definitive book *The Nashville Sound: Bright Lights and Country Music* (University of Georgia Press).

It is precisely this type of country that Bing explores in *Bing Crosby Sings the Great Country Hits*, an album that would end up seeing the light of day in 1965, more than a year after it was recorded in Hollywood. The taping of the twelve songs that make up the LP took place over the course of three sessions, one on October 29 and two on October 31, 1963. All three dates were led by Alabama native Bill Justis, who had recorded for Sam Phillips' legendary Memphis-based Sun Records label, had a hit with the instrumental "Raunchy" in 1957, and had subsequently moved to Nashville to follow a successful career as a record producer. The studio band that Justis assembled for the occasion was outstanding and included noted jazz musicians such as guitarist Barney Kessel and bassist Don Bagley, as well as a young Glen Campbell, who was still a session player at the time but who would become a country superstar in just a few years. Unfortunately, Bing was suffering from a cold throughout both sessions, but although this inevitably shows here and there, it doesn't detract from the overall enjoyment of an album that brings together a slew of top-notch Nashville-style songs with which Crosby feels as comfortable as ever.



The opening track, Don Gibson's "Oh, Lonesome Me," already offers some clear indications as to what the concept of the entire package will be: a collection of tunes that had been made successful by the cream of Nashville songwriters and performers, complete

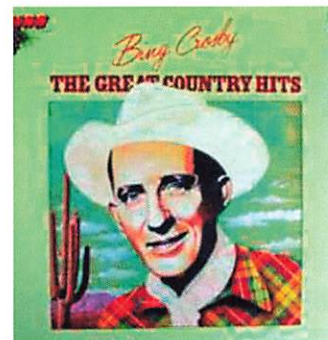
with choirs and string arrangements that can sound a little intrusive at times but that tend not to stray too far from the original versions. Bing's cold comes across rather strongly on this first selection, but all in all, it's a promising beginning and a fair rendering of Gibson's bouncy 1958 composition. "Heartaches by the Number" is one of two songs on this album that were hits for the great Texas singer Ray Price. Written by Harlan Howard, one of the best songwriters to ever set foot in the Music City, the tune is perfect for Bing's voice, and he sounds confident and in complete control. Though the arrangement maintains the four-four shuffle beat of Price's original version, it's clearly inspired by Guy Mitchell's pop reading and the track is arguably one of the highlights of the album. "Four Walls" is the quintessential Nashville Sound ballad, a 1957 smash for Jim Reeves, the quintessential Nashville Sound balladeer who had taken quite a few tips from Bing to devise his unmistakable singing style. Bing begins with the chorus, and despite the dramatic arrangement, turns in a very convincing performance.

Then it's back to Ray Price territory—sans the shuffle beat this time—for "Crazy Arms," a tune that a very young Jerry Lee Lewis had cut as one side of his first single at Sun Records. As before, Bing sounds comfortable covering Price, though he sometimes has to struggle to avoid being drowned by a rather overbearing string chart. Eddy Arnold is yet another country singer in whose singing style we find traces of Bing, and his 1948 ballad "Bouquet of Roses" had crossed over to the pop charts and had even been recorded by Dick Haymes, so it was a natural choice for the album. We reach much farther back in time for the track that closes the first side of the LP: "Wabash Cannonball" was based on an old railroad folk song that had been waxed in the '20s by the Carter Family but that will forever remain associated with Roy Acuff, who made a wildly popular recording in 1936. The fast-paced tune doesn't suit Bing too well, though it does benefit from a couple of brief guitar solos by Glen Campbell.

As we flip the record over, we find "Wolverton Mountain," a story song written by Merle Kilgore (of "Ring of Fire" fame) and Claude King, which went to number one on the country charts for the latter just a year before Bing's version. Crosby handles the song as well as he can, but the track suffers from a choir-laden arrangement that more often than not comes across as rather annoying. Things improve on "Hello Walls," a rare case of Bing covering a Willie Nelson

original that became a crossover hit for the excellent Louisiana-born singer Faron Young in 1961. Crosby delivers Nelson's typically clever lyrics with gusto, sometimes almost speaking rather than singing them. The result is a winner that even makes us wish Bing had recorded more songs by Nelson, who, by the way, was still better known as a songwriter than as a singer at the time. Hank Cochran, another one of Nashville's stellar composers, was responsible for "A Little Bitty Tear," which charted for singer-actor Burl Ives in 1961. Though the tune is simple and as catchy as they come, Bing seems to be experiencing some trouble with the tempo, often singing in front of the beat, as if he felt that the arrangement was a little too slow.

"Jealous Heart" is yet another high point of the album, a classy song cut by a myriad artists that comes from the pen of the excellent, though underrated, Jenny Lou Carson. It's obvious that Bing is attuned to its beautiful melody and does an outstanding job with it, delivering a very powerful, moving performance. It's anyone's guess, however, why the next tune was selected at all for inclusion in the album. "Still" had been a hit for Whisperin' Bill Anderson—a fine, prolific songwriter in his own right—just a few months before the sessions, but Bing doesn't seem to know what to do with its repetitive melody and structure, and it remains one of the least successful tracks on an LP that comes to a close with "Sunflower," a rather inconsequential ditty by Mack David (yes, that Mack David, who wrote the English lyrics to "La Vie en Rose" and to Duke Ellington's "I'm Just a Lucky So-and-So") with which Bing has as much fun as it is possible to have.



Although Ken Barnes describes it as "an unremarkable Country and Western package" in his book *The Crosby Years*, the album was met with generally positive reviews upon its release in 1965. For instance, an anonymous writer for *Variety* felt that "the

veteran singer finds himself in a very congenial groove with a group of backwoods ballads which he delivers with an easygoing lilt just tailored for this material" and *Billboard* noted that Crosby "[demonstrates] his feeling and understanding of lyric" and "maintains his own great style," singling out "Heartaches by the Number" and "Jealous Heart" as the two standout tracks. In a 1966 review, *The Gramophone* seems to agree with Barnes, considering the album "third rate" and suggesting that it "make[s] easy listening but poor Crosby." However, a further piece that appeared in 1969 in that same publication attenuates the criticism: while admitting that some of the tunes work well with Crosby's "clear mellow tones," the writer doesn't seem to approve of certain song choices and concludes that "even Mr. Crosby cannot do much with lightweight superficialities like 'Still,' but he also makes everything very agreeable for listening."

Despite the consistently high quality of the proceedings, *Bing Crosby Sings the Great Country Hits* remains one of the least-known and least-discussed albums in the Crosby canon, the kind of record that one tends to overlook when considering Bing's body of work of the '60s and '70s. The fact that it isn't readily available in digital form surely doesn't help much. While it was reissued on CD along with *That Travelin' Two-Beat* (an odd pairing if I ever saw one!) by Collector's Choice in 2001, that release has long been out of print and, at the time of this writing, it isn't always easy or cheap to find. In my opinion, it's one of those titles that deserves a serious CD reissue, with improved sound and extensive notes, a reissue that would restore it to its rightful place as one of Bing's most satisfying record projects of the sixties.

Anton Garcia-Fernandez

(Editor: Many thanks, Anton. The delay in issuing this album was thought to be due to Bing being asked to re-record some of the songs because of his head cold which is apparent on several of the tracks. It is implied that he refused to do so.

Fred Reynolds, writing in his The Crosby Collection series of books, concurs with Anton's view of the album saying it "has been underrated and is a good round up of country songs". It's interesting to note though that no singles were issued from the album. So what did the fans think when the album was first released? Frank Murphy, writing in BING #2 (April 1966) said:

"Without question, this new Crosby album has raised more comment than any other new release for many a year - never has my mailbag been filled with so much comment devoted to the latest record release... generally the album, except for the comment re Bing having a cold on some of the tracks, is being received with great enthusiasm all round."

Ralph Harding writing in the 'Crosby Collector' was very enthusiastic as always but concerned about the lack of promotion of the album.

Finally, I smiled at Anton's description of "Sunflower" but it turned out to be a very profitable song for Mack David. Jerry Herman's hit theme song for Hello, Dolly!, composed over a decade later, used four bars of David's "Sunflower". When David sued Herman for copyright infringement, Herman settled out of court with David (for a reputed \$250,000), claiming he had never heard David's "Sunflower" prior to working on "Hello, Dolly!".

The Harasen Line

Veteran broadcaster Lorne Harasen from Regina, Saskatchewan interviewed Bing on many occasions and he has been re-listening to the tapes of those interviews. Here are some more memories of those meetings.



Bing Crosby endeared himself to the world with his considerable singing and acting abilities. Lesser known was that he was an astute businessman and had a lifestyle that made him a very active outdoorsman.

Bing was perhaps better known to some people as a golfer and a promoter of the game. He won a number of club championships in the United States and for many years he was a sponsor of the Pro-Am at Pebble Beach California. Some funds from this event went to charities. Bing was particularly proud of the fact that funds were directed to student loans for students attending colleges without endowments or major scholarship programs. Significant was the fact that there was a very high rate of pay back on the part of students which kept the money in constant circulation for the purpose intended.

Bing was an excellent golfer and the interesting part of this was that while he played the game he also practiced. Weekend golfers such as me when I played the game did our practicing as we played which really is not that effective.

Son Nathaniel is a chip off the old block when it comes to golf having won the U.S. National Amateur championship in 1981 and more recently being named Walker Cup Captain.

Nathaniel wrote a book in recent times entitled "18 Holes with Bing" with the foreword written by Jack Nicklaus.

Bing played golf all over the world including in my country Canada. Here he played in Calgary, Montreal, Jasper, Banff, Victoria and Vancouver where he said the Capilano was one of the best courses in the world.

Entertainer Phil Harris was a favored companion in golf and hunting and of course Bing played golf with Bob Hope. He said teeing off with Hope usually drew a crowd for the "colloquy" (Bing had an admirable vocabulary which he used to its full extent). Dancer Fred Astaire was also an occasional golf companion.

Bing cautioned that one didn't enter a golf wager devised by Hope because if you studied it closely you would find that there was no way that you could win!

Crosby once told me that *"when hunting season comes I put away the sticks"* (golf clubs). He said he could be



Hunting with Phil Harris.

found hunting every weekend or at least two days in mid-week. Bing mostly hunted game birds including ducks, geese, quail, Hungarian Partridge, Sharp Tailed Grouse, White Winged Doves, etc. During one of my phone calls late in the season he told me that he had hunted in Mexico, Iowa, Missouri, Alabama, Texas, the California Duck Club and Canada. At other times there were also several African safaris where Kathryn and the children attended because Bing thought it would be a good learning experience for the youngsters in a different country and culture.

Bing hunted in Alberta in Canada including in my province of Saskatchewan where south of the little city of Swift Current he hunted *"the sporty, elusive little Hungarian Partridge"* among other game birds.

As someone interested in pure bred dogs I was curious about the dogs that Bing hunted with. Not surprisingly Crosby was fond of the Labrador Retriever a highly dependable breed that police, security people and the blind also cherish. Bing said he gave several pups to the U.S. organization that trains seeing eye dogs for the blind.

Crosby said that in the field Labs don't bark very much and are not nervous. He added, *"They are very affectionate and they seem to enjoy pleasing their master. Just your tone of voice tells them if you approve or not."* They are very popular in Canada for their stamina and their short coats make for easy movement through brush and stubble fields.

Bing said they had anywhere up to a half dozen dogs on hand around the house with some too old to hunt, some just pets, Harry's field trial retriever and others used as what Crosby termed *"meat dogs"* or those used for hunting.

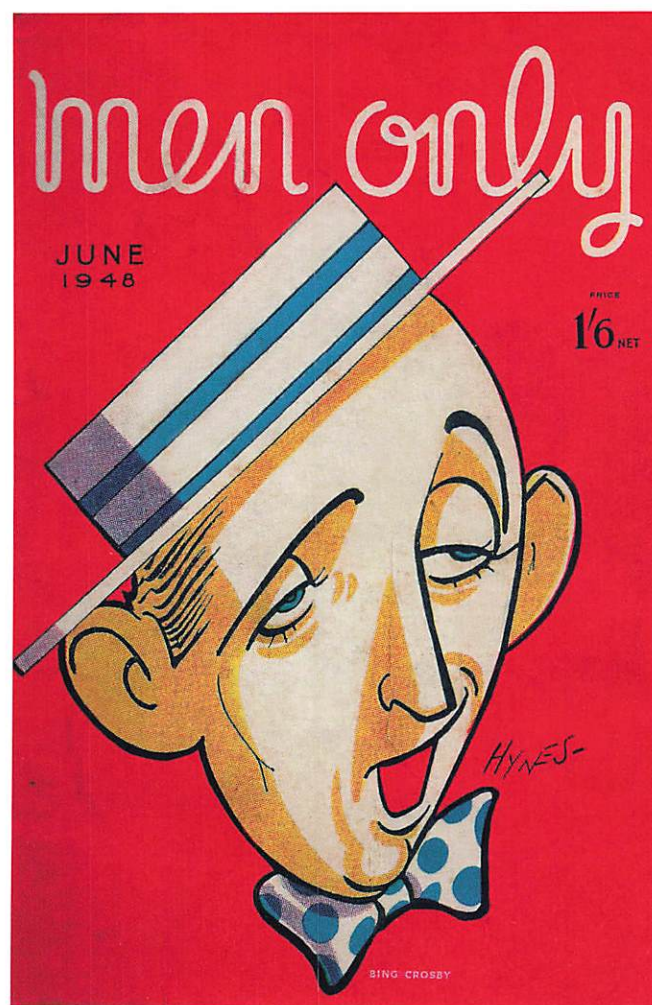
A case of mistaken identity almost cost Bing a place to stay as he returned from a hunting trip. He and writer Bill Morrow had spent a month fishing and hunting in the Prince Rupert area of British Columbia. On the

way home they stopped at the Hotel Vancouver and asked for two single rooms. Bing had a month's growth of beard and he was wearing hob-nailed boots, hunting trousers, a big jacket and beat-up cap. He and his partner looked a bit seedy. After a quick consultation with someone, the desk clerk said he was sorry but they were sold out. Walking back about a half-way to their car the hotel manager ran after Bing and friend and apologized for the "mistake" and two rooms were available after all.

Dedicated hunters and fishermen are almost always conservationists and conscious of the environment. Bing Crosby would certainly fall into that group because ignoring catches and bag limits and disregarding the fragility of the environment would soon have cost him an activity that he truly loved.

Lorne Harasen

(Editor: Lorne's book about his long career titled, *The Harasen Line, A Broadcaster's Memoir* was published by FriesenPress, Suite 300 – 990 Fort St., Victoria British Columbia, V8V 3K2 Canada (www.friesenpress.com, e-book \$4.99, paperback \$18.99. Hardcover \$29.99). To order it, either go to the publisher direct or order from Lorne at 86 Marquis Crescent, Regina Sk. S4S 6J9 Canada.)



Bing and the Derby



Vine Street Theater (LA County Library).

Bob Phillips worked for Bing in the early 1950s and he shares some more memories of his time in Hollywood.

In the fall of 1949 Bing Crosby moved his radio show to CBS and used the CBS Radio Playhouse also known as the Vine Street Theater for the recording sessions when the show was done

in Hollywood. The recording sessions lasted from morning until evening when the audience show was held. It too was recorded, since what was broadcast over the radio was a tape prerecorded version of it using selections from the recording sessions. It was a very casual operation. Bing was not worried about mistakes because it was not a live broadcast.



The above ticket is for the audience show on Wednesday, 17 October 1951 at the CBS Radio Playhouse. It is an unusual one since it is for the date and time of the radio broadcast, which was on Wednesday at 6:30 PST or (9:30 EST in New York). However, this session was for future broadcasts, and the radio program heard that day noted it was prerecorded.

There was a set schedule for these sessions since the guest artists had to know when their parts were to be recorded and that included Bing. He was noted for disappearing during the sessions, but most always appeared on schedule for his part. However, his disappearance was not always without concern and the question would be asked, "Where is Bing?" The reply



Vine Street Brown Derby.



Original Brown Derby (LA Lib).

was, "If he is not playing golf, he is having lunch at the Brown Derby."

For most people, the Brown Derby restaurant was the iconic brown hat located at 3427 Wilshire Boulevard near the Ambassador Hotel with its Cocoanut Grove night club. It opened in 1926 and became an important part of the entertainment scene.

The first reaction of the uninitiated was, "How is Bing going to make it back in time for his session?" The restaurant was about five miles from the theater through Los Angeles traffic. Yet Bing always was on time.

The answer was, there was a second Brown Derby at 1628 North Vine Street just across the street from the Vine Street Theater at 1615 North Vine. It was opened in 1929 to be closer to the entertainment clientele in Hollywood and became the most popular of the three Brown Derby restaurants with them. The other was in Beverly Hills. The Vine Street Derby also was home to the Hall of Fame Record Room where portraits of the top recording artists were hung on the wall.

Bing probably visited the Brown Derby when he did his weekly radio show from the NBC studios before moving to CBS. They were just a block south on Vine street. In any case Bing definitely had a history with the Vine Street Brown Derby. It closed on 3 April 1985, and later the 1994 Northridge earthquake damaged the building. It was declared unsafe and demolished. The Vine Street Theater is now the Ricardo Montalban Theatre and is now used for stage shows.

Bob Phillips

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of \$3 or £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries. Please send all advertisements to the Editor.

Gord Atkinson 715-2018 Robertson Rd., Nepean, Ottawa, ON, K2H 1C6, Canada.

Gord's latest book "The Golden Years of Entertainment" is available to Crosby collectors for \$20.00 US or Canadian funds or equivalent in British pounds. Write to Gord direct.

John Bassett "Bingville", 15 Oast Way, Rochford, Essex SS4 1RZ, UK

WANTED: The following UK 7" vinyl records are required in good condition. Please state prices and postage costs. Brunswick 45rpm singles: 45-05244, 45-05269 and 45-05339
MGM 45rpm EP: ES 3515 "Bing and Satchmo" – Stereo issue only.

Malcolm Macfarlane details on inside front cover.

The following are offered for sale with the proceeds going to the ICC funds.

1. *First Hits – The Book of Sheet Music 1946-1959* (by Brian Henson and Colin Morgan) (see Books 'n' Bing) - £5 + postage (£3 in UK).
2. *Going My Way – Bing Crosby and American Culture*, (edited by Ruth Prigozy and Walter Raubichek). (see Books 'n' Bing) £9 + postage (free in UK, £9 worldwide).
3. *Bing – A Diary of a Lifetime* (the 1997 version by Malcolm Macfarlane with many photographs). £20 + postage (free in UK, £9 worldwide).

Neil Robinson Burton-on-Trent, UK

Neil is now aged 96 and he feels that it is time to let his collection of 570 Bing 78s go to a younger Bing fan. He is not asking for any payment and the 78s will of course have to be collected. Will anyone interested please contact Michael Crampton in the first instance and he will then liaise with Neil.

Stanley Simon 800 Ocean Parkway Apt.4J Brooklyn NY 11230, USA. Tel. # 347 601 3189

Crosby Records on 78's, 45's, LP Albums, Tapes and CD's for sale. 65years on collections. Please call or write me for specific details.

Crosby Clubs Around the World

The ICC is very pleased to be associated with the Australian Bing Crosby Society. The society's details are:

The Australian Bing Crosby Society

Peter De Ryk, 11 Holden Rd., Kallista, Victoria 3791, Australia.

Tel: [03] 9755 3013. Email: deryk@net2000.com.au

Bi-monthly newsletters are issued by the Society and they can now be received in PDF form by email if desired. The regular film nights continue and in April it was planned to show Bing's film *Rhythm on the River* with a supporting item called *There's a Future in the Past* featuring Vince Giordano & The Nighthawks. Unfortunately there were difficulties with screening *Rhythm on the River* on the night so it was brought forward to the June meeting when it was shown together with a 1960 TV special "Ella Fitzgerald Live in Australia". Dates for further film nights are Aug. 20, Oct. 15 and Dec. 10. The venue continues to be the Library behind the Collingwood Town Hall complex at 11 Stanton St., Abbotsford, Melbourne.

Internet Sites

BING magazine

This contains a considerable amount of reference material all of which is being updated as new information arises.

See www.bingmagazine.co.uk

Crosby Fan World

This bulletin board type site is at:

<http://crosbyfanworld.boardhost.com/>

Mature and knowledgeable contributions are being made and the site is sensibly moderated by Richard Baker.

Other sites well worth a visit are:

www.BingCrosby.com - run by Bing Crosby Enterprises

Bing Crosby on Facebook - run by Bing Crosby Enterprises

Bing Crosby House (on Facebook)

Bing Crosby on Twitter - @Bingconstantly and @Bing_Crosby are the links. On Instagram, please follow 'bingsings'.

Harry Lillis "Bing" Crosby—"Der Bingle"—The Bing Crosby Fan Page – a Facebook group.

The Early Bing Crosby 1926-1936 a Facebook group administered by Mike Pearl

Bing Crosby Appreciation Group – run by Gary Rise on Facebook

Jon Oye's Blog – run by ICC stalwart Jon Oye.
Go to: <http://derbingle.blogspot.com/>

The Bing Crosby News Archive - David Lobosco runs this blog at <http://bingfan03.blogspot.co.uk/>

Steven Lewis' Bing Crosby Internet Museum
See <http://www.stevenlewis.info/crosby/>

Other Appreciation Societies

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email: tony@flias.com, website: www.flias.com/) - a magazine called *Laine Lines* is published three times a year.

International Al Jolson Society - c/o Sandra K. Gerloff, 419 Glenwood Drive, Douglassville, PA 19518, USA (website: www.jolson.org - also on Facebook). A different Jolson radio show can be heard via the web site each week.

International Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 15 Kilpin Hill Lane, Staincliffe, West Yorkshire, WF13 4BG, UK (phone: 01924 401909, email: markfoxtbas@hotmail.com).

Memory Lane - P. O. Box 1939, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 3UH, England. (www.memorylane.org.uk)

The acclaimed quarterly magazine for lovers of 1920s, 1930s and 1940s music. A "must" for 78 RPM collectors. Initial annual subscription only £10 (UK) or £15 (overseas) for readers of BING magazine. (Normal price £16 - UK, £22 - overseas.)

Sinatra Music Society - Mrs. Pat Harvey, National Secretary, 11 Mossbank Avenue, Burntwood, Staffordshire WS7 4UN, UK (tel: 01543-899771, www.sinatramusicsociety.com/).

The Society was founded in 1955. A quarterly magazine called *Perfectly Frank* is issued. Fees within the UK are £15 a year; £19 for European membership and £23 for the rest of the world.

Books 'n' Bing

1. First Hits – The Book of Sheet Music 1946-1959

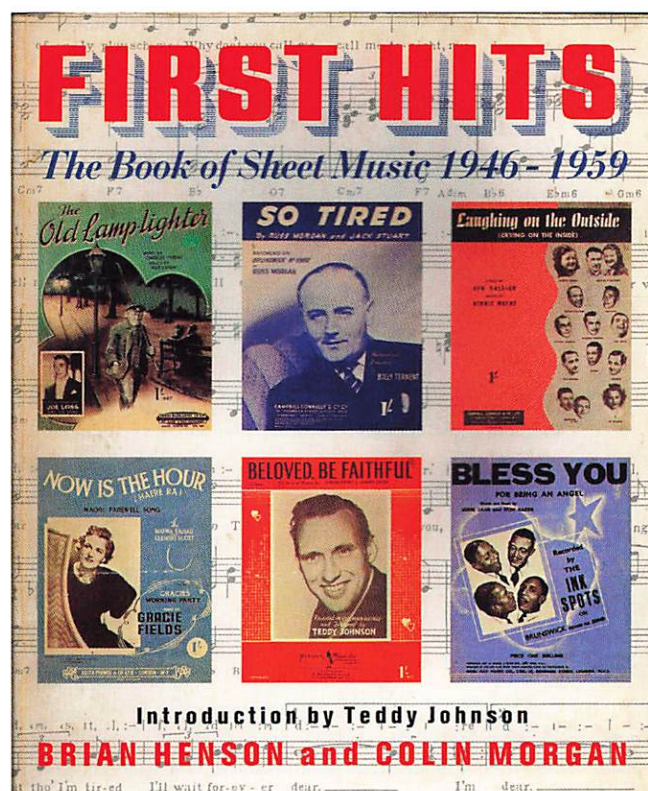
By Brian Henson and Colin Morgan. First published in 1989 by Boxtree of London, 302 pages. ISBN 1-85283-268-1.

Various charts for record sales had been around for some years before Billboard printed its first comprehensive "Best Selling Records" chart on July 20, 1940. Further charts were issued by Billboard over the following years. It was not until November 14, 1952 that a chart for record sales in Britain appeared and that was published by the New Musical Express. Al

Martino was at number one with "Here in My Heart" and Bing was sitting nicely at No. 4 with "The Isle of Innisfree".

To obtain some idea of what songs were popular in the UK before 1952 however, we have to look at sheet music sales and Michael Crampton recently gave your Editor this fascinating book.

The authors remind us that there was a time when nearly every other household had a piano while only a few had a gramophone. That was the pre-World War Two situation when sales of sheet music were so great that they were equivalent in their own way to the record sales of the 60s and 70s.



A total of 1100 songs appeared in the Sheet Music Charts in the UK between 1946 and 1959. Sales figures were obtained from the Wholesale Music Distributors' Association initially and later from the Music Publishers' Association.

For each song, the book lists the composers, the publishers, the date of entry into the charts and the weeks on the chart. Underneath this basic information is listed the recordings of the particular song. For example, "Galway Bay" has 11 recordings listed including Bing's. The song was the first one to hit No. 1 in its first week on the chart and it spent 39 weeks in the charts (22 weeks at No. 1) and this makes it the top song of the 1100 songs listed in the book. Peak sheet music sales of the song were astonishing, running at an incredible 75,000 per week. It is said that this was initially due to Anne Shelton who had promoted the song on a BBC radio programme in April, 1948. Unfortunately she did not get around to recording it until June and meanwhile Bing's version had arrived in May and was selling well even though it was more expensive.

In all, 79 songs recorded by Bing appeared in the sheet music charts. Surprisingly, the sheet music sales of "White Christmas" were not outstanding and the song did not appear in the charts until January 1955, presumably due to the impact of the film. Perhaps everyone had already bought the sheet music before 1946?

Crosby songs to reach No. 1 for sheet music sales during the period were:

Among My Souvenirs
A Gal in Calico
People Will Say We're in Love
Now Is the Hour (15 weeks at No. 1)
Galway Bay
Fat Away Places
Riders in the Sky
Dear Hearts and Gentle People
Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer
Secret Love
No Other Love
Around the World (14 consecutive weeks at No. 1)

I thought I might see "True Love" at No. 1 but it missed out, peaking at No. 2 during 35 weeks on the chart. There were 13 other recordings of the song listed! "The Isle of Innisfree" was another that reached No. 2 during 28 weeks in the charts.

This is a fascinating book and I am having great fun browsing through it. Remember Donald Peers, the British heartthrob of the late 1940s? He has 47 entries and Denny Dennis (one of the British "Bing Crosbys") has 27 songs listed. Frank Sinatra has 41 entries but he was of course concentrating on albums towards the latter part of the period covered. Elvis Presley sheet music was obviously not a priority for the fans as only 13 songs are listed. The big sheet music sellers tended to be music for dancing from the orchestras with Victor Silvester having an incredible 211 entries (19% of all the songs in the book!), Geraldo 75 and Billy Cotton with 69.

The book even includes records listed by Woolworth's Embassy label and it was nice to see that the first record I ever bought – "Diana" by David Ross on Embassy WB. 252 in 1957 – was shown. I had wanted to buy the Paul Anka version but the Embassy version was a lot cheaper and that mattered to a 14-year old!

A list is given of all the sheet music that reached No. 1 and I must admit that songs like "Tell Me, Marianne", "The Hop Scotch Polka", "Silver Dollar" and "Beloved, Be Faithful" did not immediately come to mind.

The songs with the most recordings available were "April in Portugal" (22), "Tenderly" (20) and "Stranger in Paradise" (19). Not something that happens today.

By the way, the ICC has a spare copy of the book and it's being offered in Trading Post to raise funds for the club.

Malcolm Macfarlane

2. Going My Way – Bing Crosby and American Culture

Edited by Ruth Prigozy and Walter Raubicheck, published by University of Rochester Press in 2007, hardcover, 202 pages, ISBN-10: 1-58046-261-8. (See Trading Post)

This book contains many of the papers presented at the 2002 conference "Bing Crosby and American Culture" at Hofstra University and one that's very worthwhile reading is that by Steven Crosby, Gary Crosby's adopted son.

Thoughts on Relationships: Father, Son, Grandson

Having a grandfather by the name of Bing Crosby was, to say the least, very interesting. Everyone hears of stories of individuals who have a famous father or mother or some distant relative, and of the benefits and some burdens that accompany fame. In my situation, being somewhat removed as a grandson, the relationship was far simpler and more straightforward. In other words, it was the fairly typical grandfatherly relationship, the normal give and take that anyone might expect.

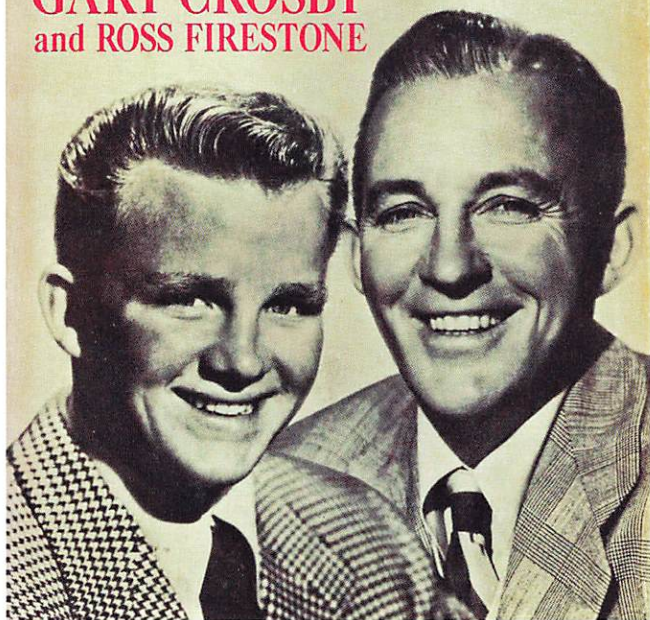
On the other hand, my father, Gary Crosby – an actor, singer, entertainer – had a very different relationship with this father, Bing Crosby, one that spanned the many emotions, from love to anger. In some ways, it might be said to be typical of a strong father and a strong-willed son. A closer look may provide some insight into the question that has always been raised when speaking about Bing Crosby: "Was he a mean father?"

As we all know, my dad wrote a book, *Going My Own Way*, about himself and *his* father. If we read the book without thinking about typical parental relationships – especially those involving fathers and sons, and particularly the oldest male child – we might conclude that father and son disliked one another intensely. But the truth is that there was a mutual respect between the two men, although their interactions were often difficult and trying.

My dad grew up at a time – the 1930s, 1940s, and early 1950s – when men's emotions were not expressed, but rather were expected to be buried. A man showed emotion by fighting, not by talking; it was a world far different from ours today. At the same time, my dad, like most of us, had his own personal demons; his were manifested in the form of alcoholism. And while he stopped drinking in the early 1960s, it took him many years to comprehend and to acknowledge all of the "stuff" he had inside him. Some of that was parent-related. Remember, Bing's first wife, Dixie, died when my dad was just eighteen years old. The pain of watching a parent die must affect the feelings of the child. Further, the enormity of the name "Bing Crosby" played a part in my father's trying to find his own place in society, and the entertainment industry played another role, creating pressures that were not expressed openly and leading to many unresolved issues between father and son.

GOING MY OWN WAY

GARY CROSBY
and ROSS FIRESTONE



The book my dad wrote was cathartic for him in many ways, but it should be remembered that it was written from the point of view of one man, from his perspective, experience, and a particular moment in his history. We cannot forget that as we look at the reasons for his writing the book – here was a genuine opportunity for him to articulate feelings, better understand himself, and think about the consequences of his actions. I do know that many people questioned the intent of the book, but there is always some truth in one's writings. It again comes down to the personal perception and experience of those involved with one another. In cases of family memories, why does each person in a family remember an event differently from the other family members? The answer probably lies in the perspective from where one views or experiences the events described.

From my perspective, my grandfather treated me with respect, encouragement and love. A good example of his affection for me occurred during my senior year at the University of Santa Clara. I was approached by the university to find out if my grandfather would perform at a fundraiser for the university as part of an annual show – the “Golden Circle” dinner party. Performers in previous years included Frank Sinatra, Bob Hope, and Andy Williams. I was a bit nervous about asking my granddad – and it was at that moment that I truly realized the enormity and importance of this man – because with one positive response, he could raise \$250,000 for my school. I called him on the telephone and asked if I could drive up to his home in

Hillsborough, just south of San Francisco, and speak with him. He said, “Sure.”

When I arrived, his ever-present and quite entertaining butler, Alan Fisher, answered the door and brought me to the study where my grandfather was seated. He said, “What can I do for you?” I took a deep breath and asked the question: “Would you do me a favor and perform for a large fundraising event for my university?” He looked at me and smiled ever so slightly and said, “Sure – when is it?” With that statement, I felt a cool breeze come across my body and the uneasiness left. I later found out that he was happy to do it, was proud of me for going to college, and further pleased that I was on my way to law school the following year.

As anyone might guess, the performance at the university was superb. The entire family was present on stage, along with Rosemary Clooney singing and Joey Bushkin playing the piano. The audience loved it, the university was very grateful, and there was one extremely happy college senior sitting in the audience beaming brightly.

It is clear that the relationships I’ve described, both my father’s and grandfather’s with me, and mine with each of them, were separate and distinct. I learned a great deal from them about the importance of listening and of understanding and of valuing humility; they both taught me many lessons, each in his own style and manner. I have much to be thankful for from both of these very important men – both with public personas – but one clearly cast a long shadow over all others. In other words, I am a very lucky man.

Steven Crosby

(Editor: I thought Steven had an awful lot of courage to speak at Hofstra and he came across as a very impressive man indeed. He had graduated from Loyola Law School in Los Angeles in 1981 and when he spoke at Hofstra he was working at Seattle-based Vulcan Inc., the brainchild of billionaire investor and philanthropist Paul G. Allen, the co-founder of Microsoft. In his capacity as vice president of corporate communications, Steven reported directly to Allen and oversaw Vulcan’s in-house marketing, PR, media relations, advertising, special events, promotions, community outreach and government affairs teams. Steven went on to have a very successful career and last I heard he was with JCI Worldwide.)

Steven was the son of Gary’s first wife, Barbara Cosentino, from her previous marriage and he was adopted by Gary. Barbara and Gary divorced in 1981 and Gary himself died in 1995. The book “Going My Own Way” (published in 1983) is mainly about Gary’s own problems as an alcoholic and possibly many Crosby fans will not have read it. It does have a reasonably happy ending though and it’s perhaps appropriate for me to reproduce that here.)

3. Going My Own Way

by Gary Crosby and Ross Firestone, published by Doubleday in 1983. 304 pages. ISBN: 0-385-17055-6.

...About as close as we came to a direct acknowledgement that the war had ended was the afternoon I was visiting him up Hillsborough and he came looking for me in the den. "Why don't we take a walk?" he asked. That was a bit unusual right there. He had never sought me out to walk with him before. I said okay. He selected a stick from the cane stand by the front door, called one of his dogs to come with us and we headed down the driveway and onto the path around the garden. The stroll didn't last more than half an hour, and on the face of it nothing extraordinary happened. Yet, compared to the other times we'd been alone together, there was a whole different feeling and a whole different sub text. He talked to me more like one adult to another. He asked me the same questions he always did, but now he asked them as if he expected an answer back for a change and was interested in whatever I had to say.

He wanted to know what was happening with my career, and I told him how hard it was getting it going again. Then we talked about my brothers. He said he wished they had some direction in life and would stop being the f***ups he thought they were. I tried to defend them. The boys and I had long since made up, and although I didn't see much of them since I stopped drinking, we still loved each other.

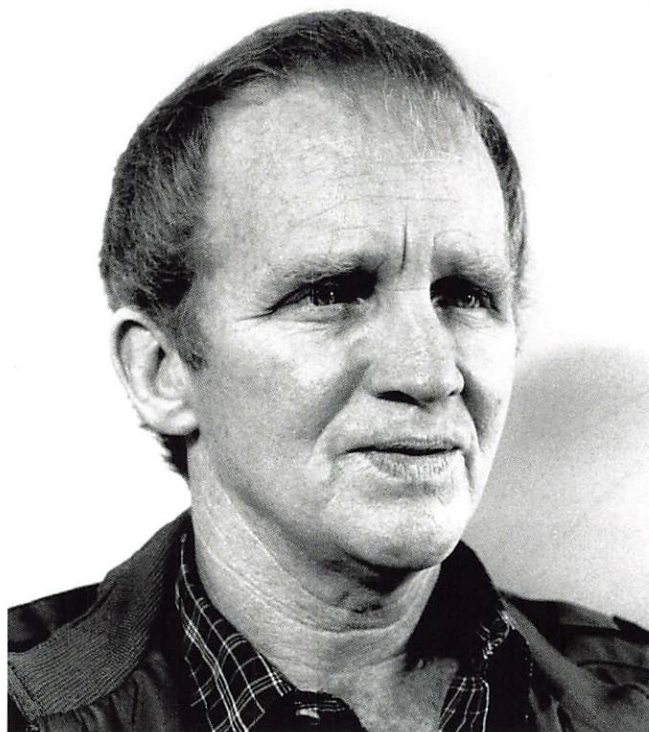
"Well, you know where they come from, Dad. We've all got problems, including me. It's not that easy being a famous man's son. They just haven't figured out yet what to do about it."

It wasn't much of a defense, of course, because he couldn't understand what I was talking about. It was inconceivable to him that the outside world wouldn't treat us the same as it treated him. He had never experienced being on the receiving end of hatred and anger. He liked everyone, and everyone liked him back. He was a very civilized man. We were not civilized. We were wild Indians, and he didn't have it in him to comprehend why we drank and carried on and did all the dumb things we did. But he took in what I was telling him - "Yeah, well, maybe ... maybe you're right" - doing his best to make sense of it.

By the time we headed back to the house, nothing had changed and yet everything was different. He hadn't apologized for a single, solitary thing, yet he had apologized. He never said he was wrong in any way, yet he had said he was wrong. On the walk up the driveway I think I put my arm around his shoulder.

Whatever it was that happened that afternoon seemed to change the way I felt about him. I wasn't afraid of him anymore, and I was no longer angry. Once he got off my case I was able to relax and take another look at him. I found myself thinking, "All right now, this man has done some good things in his life. Try to name some of them." That wasn't hard. He made millions of people happy through his talent. He contributed God

knows how many dollars to dozens of good causes. He played hundreds of benefits, giving away for free what he could have been selling for a bundle. "Okay, suppose some other man did these things. What would you think of him?" Well, hell, I'd think he was a damn good guy, really a good man, a straight dude. "Well, if he did them, then he must be a good guy too, right? That doesn't make for a bad person." I had to agree with that. So the anger was only about the way he had been with me and my brothers, and about how the people who bought his persona judged us by what they thought him to be.



Gary in later years.

But he wasn't to blame because his fans found it inconceivable that such a wonderful man could father such horrible, rotten, ungrateful children. And if he did make a mistake in raising us, he couldn't really be blamed for that either. The mistake wasn't intended. The old man believed what he believed, and he thought he was doing right. He wasn't any tougher than a lot of fathers of his generation. And a lot of kids can handle that kind of upbringing without any difficulty. It was too bad that my brothers and I didn't buy it and turn out the way he wanted. That would have made it very comfortable for everyone. But, whatever the reasons, we didn't. Linny and the twins clammed up like a shell. I bulled my neck and fought him tooth and nail all the way down the line. To my own destruction. The discipline just didn't work with us. But regardless of whether what he did was right, wrong or somewhere in between, at least he had some kind of plan. At least he was trying to bring us up the best way he knew how. At least he tried. And that's more than can be said for a lot of fathers.

Celluloid Crosby



David Lobosco looks back 67 years to examine the Crosby film *Just for You*.

Bing Crosby never made an autobiographical film of his life. He believed his life was too boring. However, if one movie would show what the life of Bing was like, I would think that 1952's *Just for You* would be the closest thing to it. The excellent

Technicolor film has Bing playing a greying widower with two teenagers who is trying to balance stardom with a family life. *Just for You* has always been one of my favorite Crosby movies, and it was one of the first films I remember seeing back in the days of classic movies on AMC.

You may remember the plot. Ever since his wife died ten years ago, Broadway producer Jordan Blake (Bing) has slowly built up a wall between himself and his two children, Barbara and Jerry. Although he undoubtedly loves his kids, Jordan finds it easier to pour his energy into his newest stage success rather than his family. Piece by piece, we see how fractured the Blakes have become. Barbara, or "Babs," has gone through 19 governesses; her latest, Mrs. Angevine, turns out to be a drunk, a fact Babs hid so as not to bother her busy father. Jerry, meanwhile, wants to be a songwriter but finds it difficult living in Jordan's immense shadow. He and his friend David demonstrate a song they have written called "Call Me Tonight" to Jordan and he also tries it out with them. They were planning to pay to have the song published but Jordan discourages them from doing this.



Jordan confronts his son Jerry.

To complicate matters, the 18-year-old Jerry is in love with Carolina Hill, the star of Jordan's current show... and the woman Jordan also loves.

A sweet, little-known musical, *Just for You* has a lot to commend it. For one thing, although he would live until 1980, it was director Elliott Nugent's last film, due to alcoholism and mental illness. The movie also has a formidable supporting cast with Jane Wyman as Carolina, Natalie Wood and Robert Arthur as the Blake children, and Ethel Barrymore as Alida De Bronkhart, the headmistress of a finishing school that Babs desperately wants to attend. While I expected astounding performances from all of these actors (except Arthur, someone I confess I don't really know), the best surprise about *Just for You* was the score from Harry Warren and Leo Robin.

The film starts off with a bang when Jordan hops up onstage during his show's dress rehearsal to demonstrate how he wants things done for the number "I'll Si-Si Ya in Bahia." I can't even describe how much joy this scene gave me. Crosby is perfection as he dances, sings, and throws in a few funny faces for good measure. The song itself has a brilliant melody, made all the more exciting by Bing's velvet voice.

Jordan needs to reconnect with his kids, but like the real life Bing, he has trouble showing his children that he loves them. At the urging of Carolina, he takes both to a resort, not far from a finishing school that Barbara would love to attend. Without realizing that Alida De Bronkhart (Ethel Barrymore) is the headmistress there, Jordan tries to learn from Miss Bronkhart the best way to get a girl accepted at the exclusive school. He also performs an old vaudeville song at a school reception, causing his daughter great embarrassment. Despite this Barbara is eventually accepted into the school.

Carolina has a heart-to-heart talk with young Jerry about being in love. He mistakenly believes Carolina means him when she mentions her intention to marry. Jerry writes a song for Carolina – "Just for You" – and presents it to her. She returns it saying that she is in love with somebody else and he realizes that he has been mistaken about her feelings. Subsequently his father sings the song and says that he wants to publish it. Jerry refuses and is crushed when he learns from his sister's phone call that Carolina has become engaged to his father. Heartbroken, he leaves home and enlists in the Air Force.

Time goes by. Jordan has discovered that Jerry is stationed in Alaska and he joins a USO tour that is to entertain at Jerry's base. He is told that Corporal Blake is away on a mission and as he entertains the troops he speaks from the heart about the highs and lows of raising children. Jordan is unaware that his son has just joined the audience and says that he is going to sing the hit "Just for You". Jerry jumps up and says that something livelier is needed and he conducts the musicians as Jordan sings "Zing a Little Zong". Jordan and Jerry, along with Carolina, are reunited for a happy ending.

Even in 1952 though the critics were pretty harsh on the movie:

Bosley Crowther of The New York Times was not

impressed. “Bing Crosby’s well-known reputation as an amiable father of boys may have no bearing whatsoever on his new picture, “Just for You,” but it is notable that, in this song-plugged fable, he plays a father who has trouble with his son...Put this one down as an endeavor in a generous cause that fails to come off entirely because it lacks sharp direction—and a script. Elliott Nugent’s staging and pacing is as rigid and uninspired as the stiff and conventional plotting in Mr. Carson’s script. And the songs and song numbers, while pleasant, are nothing to set the screen on fire.”

Variety was much happier with it at the New York preview. “*Just for You*, a Bing Crosby-Jane Wyman musical which Paramount has set for national release in September, should prove a stout factor in bringing back that “lost audience.” For this Technicolor film has a rousing, melodic score and a logical story well-acted by a fine cast. With such basic ingredients, the picture will not only satisfy the “under 35” trade but will recapture some of the older public who have temporarily lost the film-going habit...With fine material to work with, Crosby socks across one of his best portrayals.”

Just for You was placed 17th in *Variety*’s 1952 compilation of top films, earning rentals of \$2.9m in the USA and Canada.

The main draw of the film though was the music. The score by Harry Warren and Leo Robin was top-notch. Bing sang solo on “I’ll Si-Si Ya in Bahia” and “The Live Oak Tree”, but for the commercial recordings he was joined by the Andrews Sisters. Bing makes a good effort on “On The 10:10 From Ten-Ten Tennessee” with forgotten comic Ben Lessy. This song was meant to be an old vaudeville song in the film but was in fact written for the movie and is in some ways reminiscent of a Crosby-Hope duet.



Singing with Ben Lessy.

Co-star Jane Wyman was a fine singer, and she got three solo numbers to perform. One was the bright and breezy “Checkin’ My Heart” (which I loved) and one was “The Maiden of Guadalupe” (which I believe slowed down the movie and was long and boring at best). Her other song “He’s Just Crazy for Me” is heard in incomplete segments.

In addition to the songs featured in the film, two others were written for it. They were “Spring Fever” and “A Flight of Fancy”; they were used on the

soundtrack as part of the background music. Bing’s recordings of them have since been released on CD and are well worth hearing.

“Zing a Little Zong” with Jane Wyman was in the Billboard charts for six weeks with a peak position of #18. It was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Original Song of 1952 but lost out to “High Noon (Do Not Forsake Me)”.

The song “Just for You” was obviously intended to be the ballad hit but despite its build up in the film and Bing singing it three times on his radio show, it did not reach the charts. No other prominent singers recorded it.

Bing’s co-stars had nice things to say about their participation in the film.

Crosby had similarly high standards on the set. “What was really surprising about Bing Crosby to me was that he really was a very, very, bright man. He knew everybody’s lines and knew everything about the camera. He always came across as this relaxed performer but he was far from relaxed.”

(Bob Arthur as quoted in *Natasha: The Biography of Natalie Wood*, page 94)

You know I worked with Bing Crosby when I was a kid, about 13. It was a movie filmed in the mountains, at Lake Arrowhead. I was very nervous acting with him and he was sort of retiring. He didn’t say very much and I was so nervous. He kept to himself between scenes. I don’t remember him singing at all, which would have been nice. But he was real kind to me, relaxed, did everything pretty much on one take. I wish I would have gotten to know him, but I was so scared and he was such a big, big star that I didn’t have much to say.

(Natalie Wood, interviewed on *The Merv Griffin Show*)

The film overall is great. The casting is perfect. The Technicolor is perfect. Bing’s voice is perfect. If you want to see Bing at his peak and watch a fun movie then this film is for you. It is just for you!

David Lobosco

davidlobosco@yahoo.com

(Editor: Many thanks, David. I enjoyed the film and found it surprisingly moving watching Jordan’s scenes with his son when it is realised that Jerry has misunderstood Carolina’s feelings. I liked the sentimental ending too. Bing wrote about the filming in “Call Me Lucky”.

“I noticed that when Ethel (Barrymore) was rehearsing her scenes for our picture, apparently she was not concerned with her lines, the business, or the props. But when the director finally said, “Let’s take it,” her first take was perfect. Past experience with other actresses hadn’t prepared the director for such perfection, and he asked for another take as a matter of course. The more the scene was shot the worse Ethel became. Like any true champion, she’d built herself for one major effort, and that was it. She was amazed that the director insisted on taking the scene over and over.

“Is he making a collection of these things?” she asked me with some puzzlement.”(Call Me Lucky, page 185))

The Blu-ray Roads

The recent release of four of the Road films on Blu-ray has produced a number of reviews. The first is from Mike Clark writing on the Mediaplaynews web site on April 1st.

Road to Utopia

Kino Lorber; \$24.95 Blu-ray; Stars Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, Dorothy Lamour, Douglass Dumbrille.

The “Road” pictures were famous for breaking the fourth wall in what at the time were radically innovative ways, but No. 4 *Utopia* — filmed during mid-war but not released until 1945 (and ‘46 in the U.S.) — was something else. It didn’t just break the wall but blew the hell out of it — a little like that bridge in *The Wild Bunch* that explodes and drops the horses going across it (their riders, too) into the big drink. It’s a Yukon farce where talking animals rate one-liner quips and an actor/extra shortcuts his way through a Bing Crosby-Bob Hope boiler room scene on his way to another soundstage. Even Santa Claus rates a cameo. (With a couple of babes in his Christmas bag.)

As is true of many fans, *Utopia* has always been my favorite of a seven-comedy series that spanned 22 years — though the great Gary Giddins gives this honor, in the recent second volume of his dream Bing Crosby bio (*Swinging on a Star: The War Years 1940-1946*), to No. 3 *Morocco*. (It’s close, either way.) Kino Classics has just released both of them — as well as the preceding *Singapore and Zanzibar* entries — on Blu-ray, which now means that all seven titles (*Rio*, *Bali* and *Hong Kong* preceeded) are available in hi-def versions. Of this new quartet of the first four made, no one likely had to be institutionalized for exhaustion from all the work done in the remastering — and yet, my younger son happened to drop in while I watching *Utopia* and expressed surprise that “something like this” (judging by content and age) could “look this good.” So there you go.

Utopia is unique in the series because its title has nothing to do with the setting (snowbound Alaska); is the only period piece; and is the only *Road* pic where Hope ended up with Dorothy Lamour (this is no spoiler because the story is told in flashback). The story dynamics, however, adhere to the formula that started to take hold with No. 2 *Zanzibar* following the fairly straightforward *Singapore* launcher (which nonetheless cleaned up at the box office). Both stars play semi-vaudevillians with heavy chiseler streaks and libidos, though Hope’s yen for the opposite sex is a little more “out there” while Crosby plays it cooler. The plot hinges on a stolen map to an Alaskan gold mine that by rights belongs to Lamour, who has taken a chanteuse gig at a local nightspot owned by so-called family friend Douglass Dumbrille. Of course, once you see Dumbrille for the first time — even if you don’t

know the kind of roles he nearly always played — it’s obvious that he’s not to be trusted.

This is the hook, but the dialogue exchanges are sharp; Hope’s one-liner at Crosby’s entrance is one of the greatest screen put-downs I’ve ever heard, and people are still amazed that the final classic gag got by the Production Code. In retrospect, the Oscar-nominated script here is the high point of the lengthy Norman Panama-Melvin Frank association — aside, that is, from Danny Kaye’s *The Court Jester* from 1956, which is one of the most beloved cult comedies of all time (and would make a fabulous VistaVision/Technicolor Blu-ray if there’d ever been a single person at Paramount Home Entertainment who’d ever *heard* of any movie made before 1980). We also get humorist Robert Benchley, who didn’t live to see the film released, popping in for sardonic asides that apparently have always gotten a pro/con response (I had no idea they were controversial because I’ve always found them funny). And even the sometimes undervalued Dorothy Lamour gets some licks in with a spot-on senior citizen turn in the non-flashback frame.



Dorothy as a senior citizen.

In addition to recycling a long-ago featurette on the series, there’s a new joint commentary by producer/historian Greg Ford (who has one of those vocal deliveries that makes normal conversation come out funny) and the second-to-few music historian Will Friedwald. Even the score here is on the high side of the series, with “Put ‘Er There, Pal” a team classic and “Personality” the best song that any of the Road pictures ever gave Lamour (it was also a huge Capitol hit for Johnny Mercer and The Pied Pipers during the first Christmas/New Year’s after the war).

We also get the 1945 short subject *Hollywood Victory Caravan*, a bond-drive effort that in some ways anticipates 1947’s *Variety Girl* (which includes an uproarious Crosby-Hope golf routine) in the way it advances the thesis that a sweet young innocent can easily find a way to get her run of the Paramount lot, whereupon she learns that Alan Ladd, Barbara Stanwyck, Crosby, Hope and more are regular folks just like us. (I wish she’d run into Lawrence Tierney, but he was at RKO or playing Dillinger for the King Brothers.)

She also manages to get Crosby and Hope to sleep together on a train, but we won't go there. There's also Ladd sucker-punching (or sucker-tripping) William Demarest; an elaborate production number where Betty Hutton does more tap-dancing than I've ever seen her do; a throwaway walking shot that suggests that Diana Lynn had a really proportioned figure; and a ringer show-up by non-Paramount star Humphrey Bogart, who pushes audiences to purchase *post-war Bonds* while looking to me as if he might have really tied one on the previous night.

Mike Clark

(Editor: A review of one of the other Blu-ray releases popped up on the Cinema Retro site on April 7).

Review: "Road to Zanzibar"

The concept of the "Road" movie comedies proved to be a gold mine for Paramount. In all, seven of the films were made starring Bing Crosby, Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour. Happily, Kino Lorber has a number of them in Blu-ray release including the second film in the series, *Road to Zanzibar*. The film was developed for Fred MacMurray and George Burns but when those plans fell through, Paramount decided to adapt the script to be a sequel to the highly successful "Road to Singapore", the first production in what would evolve as a series. To ensure a sense of continuity, Paramount had Victor Schertzinger back in the director's chair after he had guided "Singapore" to great success. This time around, our hapless and hopeless heroes are Chuck Reardon (Crosby) and Fearless Frazier (Hope), the latter so named because he makes his living as a daredevil in their traveling carnival act. Audiences pay to see Fearless shot from a cannon and turn into a blazing fireball in the sky. However, the whole stunt is a sham and Fearless is actually afraid of his own shadow.



Bob prepares to be shot from the cannon.

The film opens in South Africa where their latest con goes awry and burns down the entire carnival. Now wanted men, the two escape on a boat to exotic Zanzibar, where the con men find themselves being conned. They encounter a victim of white slavery, American girl Donna Latour (Lamour) who is being sold on an auction block. The men pay their last dollars to rescue her only to learn that she and the "slave trader" are in cahoots, along with Donna's other partner-in-crime, Julia Quimby (Una Merkel). Despite being snookered, Chuck and Fearless are starry-eyed over Donna and allow themselves to be brought into another con that finds the foursome treading on a safari into the heart of darkness. Along the way there are threats from nature and cannibals but it doesn't deter Der Bingle from finding quiet spots to croon love songs to Lamour. (In one particularly amusing scene, they joke about how orchestra music arises out of nowhere in romantic movie scenes, only to have said music arise out of nowhere.) The main joy is relishing the chemistry between the three stars and Hope and Crosby's constant quips. An amusing plot device is how all of the major and minor characters are constantly trying to con each other.

Road to Zanzibar was a major critical and financial success with Crosby improbably winning the Best Actor award from the National Board of Review when, in fact, he just plays his usually charming self. At the time of the film's release, the world was in upheaval with Europe at war and, unbeknownst to audiences, America about to follow. Laughs were in short supply so audience enthusiasm for the antics found in the "Road" movies were understandable. What is surprising is how cheaply this film was made. It's all confined to rather small studio sets replicating the jungle and the only exterior shots are from stock footage. If you took out the trio of big stars, "Zanzibar" would be dismissed as a "Poverty Row" production. But Paramount had a good thing going. Why spend more on a film than they had to? Although dated in many aspects (white guys blacked up to play natives), the film's modest pleasures still elicit some laughs.

The Kino Lorber transfer is satisfactory but the original elements were probably nothing to get excited about. The film's cheap look and graininess is apparent but this is probably the best it's ever looked on home video. There are some welcome bonus extras including a documentary about Bob Hope and the "Road" movies and a WWII era short that depicts Hope hosting big stars to make a radio recording that was sent to armed forces around the globe. There is also a trailer gallery of other "Road" films available from the company.

Lee Pfeiffer

Road to Morocco

Francis Rizzo III contributed this review on "Morocco" to the DVDtalk web site on June 7.

The adventure begins when a boat explodes, leaving two stowaways, Orville (Bob Hope) and Jeff (Bing Crosby), stranded on a raft on the ocean. The guys wind up washing ashore in Morocco, where they run into a friendly camel and try to run a scam, pretending that Hope is mentally challenged. But the action truly gets started when Jeff finds a way to raise some cash, by selling Orville into slavery. What he doesn't know is he sold Orville into the service of Princess Shalmar (Dorothy Lamour), who plans to marry Orville.



As is usually the case, a competition for the girl emerges between Hope and Crosby, and, also as usual, the girl isn't being quite honest about her intentions (an element that is both progressive and regressive, as the woman is smarter than the guys, but also can't be trusted.) However, as is the norm with these *Road to...* movies, the plot is hardly a main concern. The focus here is the interplay between the leads, which remains as strong as ever, as escape plots and romantic competitions are all the material needed to give Hope and Crosby a chance to play, though the final act actually has some story to it for once, as Hope and Crosby need to team-up.

Though the *Road to...* films have been marked by a meta sense of humor, as the characters have made references to being in a film and break the fourth wall at times, *Road to Morocco* takes this element much further, with the theme song being heavily focused on references to being in a movie, and odd gags involved switched voices and talking camels. That level of silliness ties in nicely with the Hope/Crosby dynamic, as they seem to exist outside the bounds of reality, doing whatever they feel like, whether it makes any kind of logical sense or not.

None of this would work if it wasn't for the stars, as Hope and Crosby ooze charisma, particularly Hope, who may have been the perfect comedic actor, able to

draw laughs with a line or a look. Somewhat sarcastic, but mostly goofy, with a risqué edge. Crosby is more of the straight man, though his dialogue is often sharper, but his real contribution is the songs he sings, the reception of which will always be a matter of taste, as they tend to be of the easy-listening variety. Of course, Lamour is the secret weapon, able to combine the best of Hope and Crosby, though she doesn't get to show her funny side as much as the guys.

Since this is a film from the '40s set in a foreign country, you know it's going to be at least a bit racist, and there's certainly a good deal of stereotypical depictions of Muslims and Muslim culture, as well as the usual casting of Caucasians in non-Caucasian roles (I mean, Lamour as Shalmar alone...), but it's not the most insensitive film when it comes to such matters, and it doesn't really aim jokes at the Muslim characters. If anything, it's better considered unenlightened than bigoted, though the depiction of the mentally challenged isn't doing anyone any favors.

Kino Lorber brings *Road to Morocco* home on one Blu-ray, in a standard Blu-ray keepcase. The disc has a static menu with options to watch the film, select scenes, adjust the setup and check out the extras. There are no audio options, but subtitles are available in English.

The 1.37:1, AVC-encoded 1080p transfer here doesn't differ much from the image on *Road to Zanzibar*, with an unfortunate amount of noticeable damage, including scratches and splotches on the film, even if the image overall is relatively solid, sporting a good amount of fine detail and a steady grayscale, though the use of special effects--like rear projection or optical inserts--are very evident as a result, as flicker is noticeable in these alternate sources. The film also can come off as exceedingly dark in spots (also an issue with *Zanzibar*) but this may just be a result of the filming. Grain is once again quite obvious, and can be somewhat distracting, even if it is consistent in the film.

Road to Morocco, especially during the action-filled climax, has plenty of activity for the 2.0 DTS-HD Master Audio track to handle, and the mix, whether it's the music, the dialogue or the effects, is all well delivered. The era of recording is evident in the low-level hiss you can spot during the track's calmer sequences, but it is hardly something most would notice, especially with how active the film is aurally.

In a welcome addition from Kino, film historian Jeff Theakston provides a fact-laden audio commentary for the film, covering the origin of the Hope/Crosby pairing, the careers of the folks involved in the *Road to...* franchise and plenty of details about the making of the film. The only issue is Theakston's attempt at a Hope imitation while reading a quote from the actor, which is no doubt bold..

Kino has also brought a pair of extras over from Universal's 2003 Bob Hope Tribute Collection DVDs. Also available on the other two *Road to...* Blu-rays,



"Bob Hope and the Road to Success" (14:13) is a solid overview of Hope's career, built through interviews with authors who wrote about Hope and his friend Phyllis Diller, and illustrated with photos and clips of Hope's work. Diller, as she always was, is delightful here.

"Command Performance 1945" (5:05) is a filmed version of a radio show that delivered entertainment as requested by the troops overseas. Hope serves as emcee, introducing "Professor" Jerry Colonna and doing a bit with him about G.I. bonds. It's not nearly as entertaining as the version found on the *Road to Zanzibar* disc, but it still has historical value.

A *Trailers from Hell* episode on *Road to Morocco* (2:36) features John Landis chatting about the film over the trailer, talking about its influence on his work, the misogynist and racist elements and the franchise in general. It's quick and fun, thanks to Landis.

A sing-along video of the film's title song (2:08) is available if you, for some reason, feel like doing Hope/Crosby karaoke.

Trailers for this film, *Road to Singapore*, *Road to Zanzibar* and *Road to Utopia* are also included.

Road to Morocco sticks to the formula that the previous *Road to...* films established, giving Hope and Crosby room to do their thing without worrying much about the plot, with even more meta comedy and some of the better songs the franchise has delivered. The presentation is pretty solid, but looks its age, while the extras take a step up from the previous releases, making this likely the best selection if you want to own just one of the Hope/Crosby Blu-rays.

Francis Rizzo III

Shazam!

Your editor had a pleasant surprise when I went to see the new superhero film – *Shazam!* – in April. The opening scene is set in 1974 at Christmas and several passengers in a car are talking with the car radio playing in the background. The music being played is Bing singing "Do You Hear What I Hear". Very nice to hear this in a major blockbuster film.

Another recent film which has Bing's voice on the soundtrack is *Sonja: The White Swan* (2018) - the story of Sonja Henie, one of the world's greatest athletes and the inventor of modern figure skating, who decides to go to Hollywood in 1936 to become a movie star. Bing and The Bell Sisters are heard singing "Wait Till the Sun Shines, Nellie".

To Say - or Not to Say It - with Music

Martin McQuade tells us about a planned blockbuster which didn't come off before going on to cover other subjects.

The Road to Hollywood by Fred Reynolds (John Joyce and Son; 1986) includes an "Unrealized Projects" section. One of the more tantalizing entries is the following.

Say It with Music (1965)

It was reported that this musical film by Irving Berlin was to be produced by Vincente Minnelli for M-G-M and would star Bing Crosby, Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis, Jr., Louis Armstrong, Mitzi Gaynor Peggy Lee and Ella Fitzgerald. It was later announced that Julie Andrews would have a leading role but in 1969 plans for the film were cancelled.

An article entitled "Behind the Berlin Wall: Suspicion and Privacy Obsess Irving Berlin as He Turns 100" by Laurence Bergreen that appeared in the March 27, 1988 edition of *The Los Angeles Times* sheds light upon this on-again, off-again, might-have-been project.

Berlin also looked to Hollywood to restore luster to his career. During the late '50s and early '60s, numerous MGM screenwriters and producers labored on a musical biography of Berlin's career titled, "Say It with Music." It was to be a lavish, big-budget spectacular, filled with stars. Berlin even wrote a number of new songs to be included along with his old favorites. But the project was bedeviled by a number of problems, including constant executive shuffling at the studio and, most significantly, the songwriter's obsession with privacy.

Berlin has always opposed any attempt to portray him on screen as long as he was alive. Nonetheless, such projects have been in the works almost continuously since 1915, when his rags-to-riches life would have been a silent-

movie epic. That movie was never made, and several movies for which Berlin wrote the scores, especially "Alexander's Ragtime Band" (1938), flirt with the idea of telling the story of the songwriter's life, but do no more than that. And yet the story of the life of Irving Berlin, with its mixture of music, heartbreak and triumph, remained a natural for the movies.

Finally, in 1958, the British Broadcasting Corp. assembled a large-scale television dramatization of Berlin's life, said to be the most expensive British television production of its day. However, when Berlin got wind of the production, he had his lawyers write the BBC and insist that Berlin be written out of the script. At the 11th hour, the BBC yielded and aired a non-biographical version. In both cases Berlin got his wish that his life not be portrayed on film, even though it meant canceling his pet project, "Say It with Music," which eventually joined the ghostly archive of unmade movies about his life.

Additional research reveals that the idea for *Say It with Music* first surfaced in the 1950's, spearheaded by producer Arthur Freed, as a vehicle for Judy Garland, with Frank Sinatra as a possible co-star. Vincente Minnelli would direct. Freed relaunched the project in 1963 with great fanfare. The cast would include Robert Goulet, Julie Andrews, Sophia Loren, Brigitte Bardot and Ann Margret, who said in a press release, "Would you believe it, Irving Berlin is writing me numbers at this very moment!"



Freed contracted Arthur Laurents for a possible fee of \$250,000, to write the screenplay. Goulet would portray a jet setting gigolo who woos the female stars.

Subsequently, Leonard Gershe fashioned a treatment in 1964. Betty Comden and Adolphe Green then tried their hands in 1966. Freed told the press, "Say It with Music will be the greatest physical musical ever made... It will cover all of Irving Berlin's career with his songs to be used in medley, ballet..., vocal and imaginative forms."

This version would star Fred Astaire and, once again, this time as leading lady, Julie Andrews. The Comden and Green version consisted of three love consecutive stories that would take place in the 1910's, 20's, and the modern day, utilizing Berlin songs from the appropriate eras. The site *Julieverse* states, *Given that Julie and Astaire were the only names announced for the revised project, it's unclear if they were set to play all three love couples or just one of them. The rather glaring 35 year age gap between Astaire and Julie also seems oddly overlooked but the production team possibly figured the age differential didn't seem to matter too much in Daddy Long Legs or Funny Face, even if Astaire had been a good ten years younger in these films. The film stalled again and another script was commissioned in 1967, this time from George Wells. (There were reports that this plot would have depicted Berlin's life backwards, ending up in the ragtime era.)*

In 1968, there were press statements that Blake Edwards would now direct the film with, yet again, Julie Andrews, who was now his wife. Various reports claimed that either Fred Astaire or Frank Sinatra would co-star. George Axelrod furnished the new screenplay. Hermes Pan would choreograph. *Say It with Music* would be a 70mm roadshow spectacular with an astonishing \$15 million budget. This would have been MGM's most expensive musical.

Sadly, James T. Aubrey, who ran MGM at the time, pulled the plug because of the exorbitant price tag. He also recognized the writing on the wall. By late 1960s, the appeal for large-scale musicals was over. Freed retired in 1970, Minnelli left MGM and the studio never made another musical. Some say Berlin withdrew *Annie Get Your Gun* from circulation after MGM reneged on making *Say It with Music*.

Bing's possible roles and co-starring relationships in these various manifestations are unclear. This reporter vividly recalls seeing Bing's name connected to *Say It with Music* in many late 60's entertainment news columns. This grandiose enterprise will forever dwell in a dreamscape, with a Berlin soundtrack readymade.

Of note: Bing did record the title song on June 21-22, 1962, with Ivor Raymond conducting the orchestra and chorus. This finally saw the light of day decades hence.

A majority of this research derives from the website *Julieverse*.

<https://paralleljulieverse.tumblr.com/post/57709544257/a-trunk-musical-based-on-the-songs-of-irving>

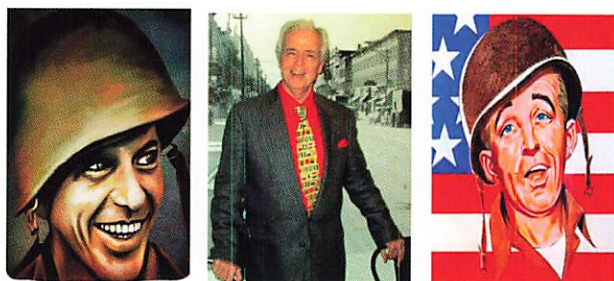
Speaking of Berlin, on May 5, yours truly performed a birthday tribute to Irving Berlin at Circles Cafe in Brooklyn. Pianist Dan Furman accompanied for this program, which naturally featured several classics identified with Bing, such as "I'm Playing with Fire," "How Deep Is the Ocean?," "Lazy," "Plenty to Be Thankful For," "Be Careful, It's My Heart," "Song of Freedom," "Blue Skies," "Everybody Step," "You Keep Coming Back Like a Song," "All of My Life" and "This Is a Great Country."

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HITS FROM THE WW2 ERA - WITH DAN FURMAN ON PIANO

Dan Furman joined me once again on May 26 at The South Brooklyn Foundry for a Memorial Day Show honoring songs from WW2, with an emphasis on songs associated with Bing and Frank Sinatra. The Crosby selections included "Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive," "I Promise You," "There'll Be a Hot Time in the Town of Berlin," "The Vict'ry Polka," "The Bombardier Song," "You Are My Sunshine," "San Fernando Valley," "Deep in the Heart of Texas," "Road to Morocco," "Moonlight Becomes You," "It's Always You," "Personality," "Sunday, Monday or Always," "Going My Way," "Aren't You Glad You're You," "You Belong to My Heart," "Be Careful It's My Heart," "The Waiter, The Porter and the Upstairs Maid" and "It's Been a Long, Long Time."

Ranking Bing's Box Office Clout

The Top Ten Money Making Star Poll conducted by the Quigley Publishing Company and published annually in *The Motion Picture Herald* and *The Motion Picture Almanac*, codified Bing Crosby's vast movie star popularity during the Hollywood's Golden Years.

The poll derived its gold-standard reliability from its source. Who could determine the stars that were able to draw millions of fans into movie theaters better than the movie theater owners themselves? Bing's dominance of the poll is well known. He held the record of holding the # 1 slot for five consecutive years, 1944-48, until Clint Eastwood and Burt Reynolds overtook that claim decades hence. His overall 15 slots in the Top Ten ensures his ranking as the 7th most popular film star, trailing John Wayne, Clint Eastwood, Tom Cruise, Gary Cooper, Tom Hanks and Clark Gable.

Bing first appeared in the Top Ten in 1934 at # 7, then ascended to # 4 in 1937 and returned to # 7 in 1940. He reemerged in 1943, rising to #3, and then maintained his astonishing # 1 peak until 1948. In 1949, Bob Hope demoted Bing to #2. One could even consider this ranking a tie, considering the symbiotic relationship shared by Hope and Crosby. The fifties began with Bing at #3 (again trailing Hope who was #2), and proceeded with him achieving # 5 in 1951, bouncing up to # 4 in 1952 (where Hope now trailed him at #5), bouncing down to #5 in 1953, and then landing at # 8 in 1954.

Quigley would annually name the next 15 stars as well. How did Bing fare when he was not in filmdom's Decalogue? Here are the stats:

1933: # 14
1935: # 12
1936: # 22
1938: # 13
1939: #11
1941: #17
1942: #12
1955: #13
1956: #20

In that final year, only 7th placed Gary Cooper, who first appeared on the list in 1929, outranked Bing as a veteran of the roster. All told, Bing consecutively appeared in the upper tiers of movie star power for 24 years. The graphing of his graceful ebb and flow would be interesting to see.

The Motion Picture Herald also published a list for the UK, which annually determined the Top Ten International stars. (There was also a separate ranking of British stars.) This corollary barometer of Bing's appeal places him at the following positions.

1940: #10
1941: #10
1943: #2
1944: #1
1945: #1
1946: #2
1947: #1
1948: #1
1949: #5
1953: #6
1955: #3

Similarly, Photoplay Magazine designated top flicker favorites. Paralleling Quigley's findings, Photoplay deemed Bing # 1 for 5 years in a row, albeit 1945-1949.

The Laurel Awards, issued by The Golden Globes, under the auspices of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, indicate Bing's continued success in later years.

1958: #10

1959: #12

1960: #12

1961: #15

1962: #4

This culminating year came with a citation. *Bing Crosby's outstanding talents through the years have brought entertainment to family audiences the world over, as well as prestige and credit to the motion picture industry.*

These polls reflect an astonishing placement in the pecking order of Hollywood royalty. Add unprecedented fame in the recording and broadcast fields and it becomes difficult indeed to envision any star ever overtaking Bing's media massivity.

Sources:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Top_Ten_Money_Making_Stars_Poll

<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0001078/awards>

A Joy Delirious

Apparently, Bing could not wait to put his stamp upon Cole Porter's masterpiece *Kiss Me Kate*, which bears his mother's name. A scant 5 days after the opening night on December 30, 1948, Bing recorded, on January 4, 1949 in Los Angeles, "Why Can't You Behave" and "So in Love" with Vic Schoen's Orchestra. Subsequently, he featured "So in Love" on his *Philco Radio Time* broadcasts in the winter and spring of 1949, thrice with Peggy Lee and once in a solo rendition on the final episode of the series on June 1. This was a roundup of the major songs of the year. He prefaces this rendition by stating, *No resume of hits would be complete without*



a number from the mighty Cole Porter. Here then is "So in Love" from Kiss Me Kate.

On the *Bing Crosby Show for General Electric* of May 16, 1954, he joined Toni Arden in a duet of this classic ballad. Bing thrice featured "Why Can't You Behave" on his Philco program during the spring of 1949, each time accompanied by Buddy Cole on piano. In one instance, he introduces this entreaty by saying, *here's one of the great songs from the Cole Porter musical Kiss Me Kate which stars Alfred Drake and Patricia Morrison.*

Porter's sensuous and naughty songs are once again arousing theatergoers, courtesy of the current scintillating manifestation of *Kiss Me Kate* by The Roundabout Theater Company at the Studio 54 Theater in New York. Similar to the 1953 MGM version, the production includes "From This Moment On," which Bing recorded with Buddy Cole and his Trio on March 8, 1956. Kelli O'Hara, Will Chase and Corbin Bleu (who recreated Fred Astaire's role in the recent Roundabout production of *Holiday Inn*) are sensational headlining a zesty cast that proves the timelessness of this theatrical treasure. Likewise, the musical direction of Paul Gemignani, who served the same function for the 1997 Broadway production of *High Society*, faithfully embraces the lustrous and droll melodies. Scott Ellis' brisk direction enables a smooth succession of showstoppers, and the adaptation allows for a complete immersion into the aura of the late 40's. Bing would certainly embrace this 70th anniversary salute to the score he so relished.

Another River Flows to Bing

"Unchained Melody", long a mainstay of the pop and blues repertoire, has an intriguing link to Bing. The song originated at Yaddo's Triuna Arts of the Theater School in Lake George, New York where William Stirrat, on a summer scholarship, became friends with future Hollywood composer Alex North, who was on the school's staff. North asked Stirrat to write the words for a melody he had composed. He reluctantly agreed, and using the pen name Hy Zaret, wrote the familiar yearning words to get over an unrequited high school infatuation.

As reported at the *News Transcript* website (<https://www.dansher.com/unchained/unchained.html>), "When he and North were working together on the song, Stirrat hoped that Bing Crosby would sing it since he was a neighbor. 'I'd spoken to Bing Crosby's wife so I thought it was a good connection. I styled it for him, you know, his songs had a dip at the end,' the lyricist said." Bing turned down the opportunity to record the still unfinished song. Eventually Stirrat gave up on the song and in 1941 signed a contract permitting North to incorporate the song in a motion picture, if he so desired.

The song laid dormant until 1955 when North, now a major film composer, received a commission to score *Unchained*, a low-budgeter distributed by Warner Brothers and based on the book *Prisoners Are People*

by Kenyon J. Scudder. North decided to use his melody and prevailed upon Zaret to finish writing his lyrics. Zaret, however, resisted North's request that the word "unchained" appear in the actual lyric, a decision that imparted to the song a life way beyond the limited popularity of the actual movie.

Unchained centers on football star Elroy "Crazy Legs" Hirsch, who plays a prisoner in a medium-security prison where fellow inmate, played by Todd Duncan (who originated the role of Porgy in *Porgy and Bess*) whiles away the hours in his cell singing the song, now appropriately named "Unchained Melody." Women visit the prisoners. Among these is Kathryn Grant, who has a modifying effect on the wayward Hirsch and helps to dissuade him from escaping. The story came full circle when Bing finally made use of that "dip at the end" and recorded the song on June 9, 1955 with Buddy Cole and his Trio for his 15-minute CBS radio show, while he was courting Kathryn.

A footnote: Bing performed one other song boasting a Zaret lyric: the polar opposite "One Meat Ball," with Lauritz Melchior on *Mail Call* and with The Andrews Sisters on *The Kraft Music Hall*, both in 1945.

Hear Ye, Hear Ye!

Fans of the music of The Roaring Decade should strongly consider attending this year's Jazz Age Lawn Party, hosted by Michael Arenella and his Dreamland Orchestra. The nostalgic frolic occurs on August 24 and 25 on Governors' Island, just off the mainland of Manhattan. This year's theme is "*Countdown to the Twenties*," in anticipation of next year's centennial of that hallowed span that witnessed Bing's emergence. So all flappers and sheiks, fill your hip flasks, shine your spectator shoes and practice your "Vo Vo De Oh Doe's" and "Wa-Da-Da's" for another excursion to those halcyon days. For more information, visit <http://www.dreamlandorchestra.com/home.php>

Martin McQuade martinmcquade2002@yahoo.com

More Forgotten Verses

In our last issue, I highlighted some of the verses to Bing's hit songs which were never used and I thought you might want a few more.

Let's start with a quiz. Answers at the end of the article.

1. One of Bing's biggest hits started with this verse.
What was it?
*I'll answer every question
That you might pre-suppose
This is no mere suggestion;
This goes...*

2. This one was a million-seller. Can you pick it out from this?

*I just can't help but say,
What a perfect Saturday,
Ev'ry moment went the way it ought to go.
I'm jealous, dear,
Already of Phil and Frank and Freddy,
I want to be your steady beau,
So...*

3. This one is a bit easier as the dialogue was partly used in one of Bing's films. The song was nominated for an Oscar.

*Do you make the most of your five senses,
Or is your life like Old Mother Hubbard's shelf?
Life is not an empty plate,
That's if you appreciate yourself.*

If I had used the verse to "Going My Way", you might have been able to guess it.

*Good morning friend, it's certainly a pleasant time to walk,
So fresh and green and clear and bright.
I'm looking for some company, thought maybe we could talk,
Do you go left or right?*

Another one which narrows the song choices is the verse to "Blue Hawaii".

*Perfume in the air and rare flowers ev'ry where,
And white shadows we could share at Waikiki.
A sky full of stars and soft far away guitars,
It seems to be only a reverie.*

This one could be worked out perhaps.

*I'll bet you were teacher's pet,
And the smartest one in class,
And you never failed to pass
That's the way I'd say it looks;
But all the things you learn'd in school never help you out at night
When the moon is shining bright
'Cause you can't learn that from books.*

And the answer is "Smarty". But I could never have guessed the verse to "I Have Eyes".

*If I were in the moonlight on a tropic isle,
Or upon the Nile
With beauty all around me
I still would see your smile
No matter what the view is,
Anywhere I am,
Anything I do I gaze at you my sweet illusion!*

It's a good job Bing didn't sing this verse to "It's Always You" as he and Dottie canoed up the river en route to Zanzibar.

*I know it's not an optical illusion;
And I'm sure it isn't just imagination
My mind is quite all right there's no confusion;
So can you offer some explanation?*



The verse to “Small Fry” does fit in nicely with the chorus though.

*Here comes that good for nothin' brat of a boy
He's such a devil I could whip him with joy
He's been carousin' at the burley cue
Just watch me teach him with the sole of my shoe –*

Finally, one of Bing's early successes “Out of Nowhere”.

*When I least expected,
Kindly fate directed you to make each dream of mine
come true.
If it's clear or raining,
There is no explaining,
Things just happen and so did you,*

I think Jack Kapp was absolutely right to exclude the verses from most of Bing's recordings. It's interesting that Bing asked Ken Barnes to include some of the verses when they worked together but I'm not sure that they were effective. Listen to “With a Song in My Heart”, “My Heart Stood Still”, “Something to Remember You By” and “Yours Sincerely” and see what you think. The verses were a little bit too rangy for Bing and it might have been better if he had simply spoken them if they had to be included. I suggested this to Ken Barnes once but you won't be surprised to learn that he did not agree!

Malcolm Macfarlane

(Answers to the quiz. 1. Only Forever 2. Sunday, Monday or Always 3. Aren't You Glad You're You)

One Sweet Letter from You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters and emails received since the last issue.

Sally Monaghan, by email from Flemington, New Jersey, USA

I just received my BING magazine yesterday. Outstanding, as always. Thank you so much for continuing to work so hard on behalf of Bing. The issue reminded me of two semi-recent references to Bing in current TV shows.

First, there's a show on Comedy Channel called “Detroiters.” It was created by and stars two comedians. One, Sam Richardson also stars on HBO's VEEP. They play the owners of a small ad company in Detroit. One episode ended with the two of them having made a rap video promoting Detroit in April. At the end, the other characters make fun of the video, and one of the two guys says, “What are you laughing at? Sorry it's not Bing Crosby.” And, it wasn't a dig; it was sincere. I was curious about these two young guys making this reference to Bing, so I looked it up. Both comedians grew up in Detroit, met at a Second City Improv group, and became fast friends because of their mutual love of Detroit, and “a highly specific love of a Christmas special with Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby,

which they watch together every December.”

Second, a reference on “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel,” a huge hit comedy on Amazon, set in 1958. Mrs. Maisel's agent, Susie, told Mrs. Maisel that people like to be famous, and in her litany of reasons why they like to be famous she said, “they get to go with Bing and Bob to Morocco.” Mrs. Maisel replies, “I want to go to Morocco with Bing and Bob.”

(Editor: It's good to see Bing popping up in these current shows.

David Lobosco's article on Top 'o' the Morning in our last issue was welcomed in particular by Jon Reichman.)

Jonathan D. Reichman, by email from New York, USA

I loved David Lobosco's article on this rarely-shown film. I caught the recent TCM showing, and agree with all of his observations.

One thing I found particularly interesting is that the film was produced by Bing himself; the copyright notice in the credits says “Bing Crosby Productions.”

Paramount only distributed it. (I'm a copyright lawyer, so I focus on these things!)

So the responsibility for all of the film's weaknesses ultimately rested with Bing, not with Paramount.

Bob Phillips, *by email from Virginia, USA*

Thank you for the articles in the latest BING. The press release and others have noted that the Crosby building is being considered for historic status. However, it has been listed by the State of California as a Historic Resource. Their present data base does not show it because they are in the process of changing their web site. They have not listed any places in it for over the last two years.

The National Register also considers it eligible, but cannot list it due to the objection of the owner. The objection does not apply to the State.

The press release also states that it is "believed" that the video recording technology was developed there. There is no doubt that it was developed there. Without the work at Crosby, Ampex would not have made it. They were aware of all our work.

See: https://ethw.org/First-Hand:Bing_Crosby_and_the_Recording_Revolution

I have attached the letter I received from the State of California confirming the building status.

(Editor: I'm very pleased indeed that Bob is on this case. It's always nice to hear from new members and learn how they discovered Bing and here's a lovely letter from Saragh Penfold to Michael Crampton.)

Saragh Penfold, *Falkirk, Scotland*

Thanks for your emails. Please find enclosed a cheque for £20 to cover subscription to the BING magazine.

I became interested in Bing Crosby through my interest in Jazz. I like to listen to the Jazz programs on BBC Radio 3 and on Saturday evenings they have Jazz Record Requests. A few weeks ago there was a request for an early Crosby record, and I was blown away by it – can't remember which one although I expect if I looked on the BBC website I could find it. I only knew Bing Crosby from his movies – and hadn't realised what a great jazz musician he was.

I have since found the International Crosby Club, and I've also read the biography "A Pocketful of Dreams" by Gary Giddins, which certainly opened my eyes to what an influential singer and person Bing was. Such is the wonder of modern technology I was able to find the songs, as I was reading about them, on Deezer and then play them over the Sonos system – so real in-depth research.

I'm looking forward to reading the BING Magazine and finding out more about his work.

Frank Startup, *by email from Cirencester, Gloucestershire, UK*

Thanks once again for an engrossing edition of BING: it's particularly interesting to read responses to 'Swinging on a Star'.

I don't know whether or not you're aware of it – apologies if you are – but there is some interesting activity on Amazon relating to Bing Crosby. From the UK Amazon, I have bought a CD called 'The Great American Songbook' which interweaves tracks from the Bregman and Scobey albums with the Cole Porter album and one or two earlier tracks. We will all have these in our collections, of course, but the juxtaposition is interesting. I've never been particularly keen on his Cole Porter renditions, finding them somewhat lugubrious, but they come to new life when scattered among the livelier tracks. I enjoyed it very much.

On amazon.com, two CDs I've never heard of before are listed. One looks like a collection of Bing singing Stephen Foster and, possibly, a selection of Burke and Van Heusen songs – tracks aren't listed – the other, under the title 'Crosby Classics', purports to be a collection of his most famous songs, but taken from radio shows instead of commercially released material. I haven't bought them yet, but will.

And now for something completely random: I have just read a novel called 'The Spoiler' by Annalena McAfee, published in 2011 and set in 1997 as newspapers are transferring to online media. It is, in part, a satirical novel taking as its theme the state of journalism in this country, particularly tabloid journalism, and opens with a young hack reporter sent to interview an aged and venerable Martha Gellhorn figure about her years reporting on critical world affairs. The young reporter, it becomes clear, is only really interested in gossip, and the journalistic doyenne, partly to shut the young hack up, suggests that she once had an affair with, among others, Bing Crosby. The lie becomes accepted as truth and part of a web of scandal which escalates as the rumours of sexual incontinence increase, resulting in events which show how stories are spun, reputations ruined and the extent to which journalistic practices and increasingly debased public taste have conspired to lower standards and give prominence to what we now call fake news.

The tropes of tabloid journalism fed by appalling cultural ignorance are beautifully parodied: 'Is this the delectable siren ...who was seen on the arm of some of the twentieth century's greatest icons of entertainment – playboy painter Pablo Picasso, crooning golfer Bing Crosby, actor and mobster's friend Frank Sinatra and Cats' author T.S.Eliot'. Crosby is described by one character as 'the immortal crooner, beloved of generations of prime-time Christmas tv classics' and by another as 'an oleaginous Republican tenor' (I can take 'oleaginous' as a statement of personal opinion, but tenor?) When the lie eventually reaches the headlines as part of a vast manufactured scandal which ruins

the reputation of the war correspondent, it bears the caption, 'Bababa Bing - another Tait conquest'. When all the truths finally emerge, including the lie about Bing – 'Never met him. Don't you know when your leg is being pulled?' – it is too late for retractions, and another media myth has been irrevocably created.

There is a short final chapter, a sort of coda, in which some of the more unscrupulous characters get a degree of come-uppance and an apology is published, but I think the novel is more powerful without that.

Truth stranger than fiction, however: I'm trying to imagine Bing Crosby with Anna Magnani as his leading lady, as mentioned in Martin McQuade's fascinating article, and having great difficulty.

Leaving aside our rather niche interest, it's worth reading on a number of levels, combining humour with trenchant social comment. It is available in a variety of formats from Amazon.

This came completely out of left field, and I thought I'd pass it on – I hope it's of interest.

Jeremy Rose, by email from Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, UK

As always, I thoroughly enjoyed Ken Crossland's Crosbyana column in BING 181. I was very interested in some comments he made at the beginning of his article regarding the challenges involved in dealing with large collections of Crosbyana which, when they become available, almost invariably do so under the saddest of circumstances.

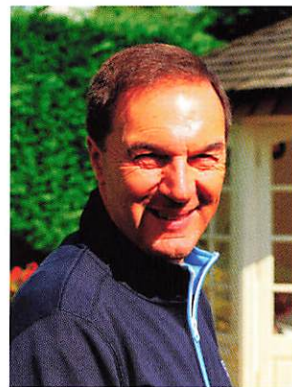
When Malcolm and I dealt with the huge collection of the late Gwen Harvey, I remember feeling extremely uncomfortable as I eventually consigned dozens and dozens of lovingly-compiled scrapbooks to the skip at my local re-cycling centre. It felt like a kind of betrayal. Ken's article made me realise that a collection is an intensely personal thing, and once the collector has gone, there is no real necessity for that collection to stay together. The fact that I was able to add a few items of Gwen's to my own collection means, I hope, that her love for Bing will live on for at least as long as my own modest collection survives.

One of those items was this flier, which ties in with Lars Schinnerling's letter in BING 181, and his German Brunswick flier from the 1930s...



Crosbyana

Ken Crossland has been listening to a 1960 album.



From a recording career that stretched for over 50 years, there are always going to be recordings that got away. "I wish I had a dollar for every time I've sung 'South of the Border'" Bing once said, in tribute to its writer, Jimmy Kennedy, but his only commercial recording of it had to wait until the Longines sessions in 1965. It's an okay recording but I, for one, have always wished he had recorded it at his vocal peak, around the time he featured it on radio. Ditto "Over the Rainbow", perhaps not listed by Jack Kapp so as not to compete with another Decca artiste, Judy Garland, but the existence of a superb Kraft radio vocal only highlights the chance that was missed.

You, no doubt, have your own list of wishful thoughts, but the final item on mine is the song "Two of a Kind", written by Bobby Darin and Johnny Mercer as the title song for their 1960 Atco duet album. Ken Barnes had the same idea for the planned album featuring Bing and Bob Hope (it would have been their first album together), and they were due to start routining it in California, the same week that Bing was buried. With the possible exception of "Teamwork", the song was as much an archetypal Hope and Crosby number as any they had ever sung.



The Darin-Mercer album is possibly my favourite by any singer, or singers, anywhere, anytime. To my great surprise and delight, I discovered last year that the master tapes of the session, long thought to have been lost in a fire, have actually survived and made their

way onto a remastered CD, with two titles that were omitted entirely from the original LP, and five more alternate takes. But as much as the songs, the thing that makes the album so great is the sheer sense of fun and enjoyment that the two protagonists must have had making the record. It leaps out of the grooves, and indeed the five alternate masters now available demonstrate precisely how much improvisation there was around every single take. It's a gem.

What has this to do with Bing? Well, apart from the near-miss on the title song, Bing himself had a duet album out in 1960, with some obvious, and some not-so-obvious, links to the Darin-Mercer collaboration. That album, of course, was *Bing & Satchmo*, financed originally through Bing's Project Records company and then leased to MGM for release. The orchestrations and the band for both projects were in the care of Billy May, but by far the biggest common denominator was none other than Johnny Mercer. Aside from contributing two new songs, Mercer also wrote new lyrics for a couple of older chestnuts, made an unbilled cameo appearance in the vocal chorus on "Up a Lazy River", and wrote the sleeve notes. The lyricist Alan Bergman, who was present at the sessions, remembered that whilst Si Rudy was nominally the producer, it was Mercer who made most of the artistic decisions about the project.

Despite having so much in common, the two albums are chalk and cheese, to my ears at least. Bing and Louis were nothing if not a spontaneously combustible pair, as any one of their radio or TV duets bears out, not to mention the *joie de vivre* of "Now You Has Jazz". But does any of that mutuality come through in *Bing & Satchmo*? Not a bit. So much so that I had always assumed that the album was not a true duet recording and that one or other of Bing and Louis had overdubbed his vocals. Phoning in the vocal, as it is sometimes called, was a generally unwelcome feature of many of Bing's recordings around that time. How else could you explain 12 songs that together fail to exhibit even the slightest hint of vocal volleying?



Enter Will Friedwald. Will, along with Gary Giddins, is one of the most respected writers on the New York scene on the topic of jazz and popular singing and his most recent book is a series of essays on *The Great Jazz and Pop Vocal Albums*. Will chose 50 albums for the book and to my utter astonishment, the Darin-Mercer project failed to make the grade. To my equal astonishment, *Bing & Satchmo* did.

There is an inevitable element of a quota-ring about Will's final list of 50 albums. Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald each feature three times in the 50, albeit twice and once respectively in duet mode, and no other performer gets more than two. There's no representation for Bobby Darin, nor for Dean Martin, Perry Como, Dick Haymes, whilst Sinatra, Nat King Cole, Peggy Lee and even Doris Day, each appear twice. And of course, its "Jazz and Pop" vocals, so there are some that are there purely for the jazz aficionados. Bing features twice, *Bing with a Beat* being the other entry.

Will is a wonderful writer with an ear and an eye for things that are different. I read his essay on *Bing & Satchmo* and then sat down to listen - and listen properly - to the album, perhaps for the first time ever. Maybe my lukewarm feeling about it had something to do with the fact that my first copy was a slimmed down version from a budget LP and missing two or three tracks. Indeed, it was only via a CD reissue, 40 or so years after the album first appeared, that all 12 tracks that Bing and Louis recorded appeared together, the Mercer-mystery "Lazy River" having originally been omitted by MGM. I hadn't appreciated that most of the songs have a lengthy jazz pedigree about them, with associations back to the early days of both the Crosby and Armstrong careers. Nor did I know that "Brother Bill" was written by Armstrong in 1939, updated by Mercer for this album and that Bing's put-down of the song's two protagonists as "two nimrods" was probably a lift from Bugs Bunny, where the word was used to refer to what Friedwald calls "individuals of substandard intelligence". How little we know.

I came away thinking that it's a much, much better album than I ever realised and well worth its inclusion. But what of the rumours that the duets were manufactured? I know from conversations I had with Will as far back as the Hofstra event in 2002, that he took the charge seriously. "That was all done live", he quotes Billy May telling him, May remembering it vividly because it was his only commercial recording with Armstrong. Gary Giddins is equally sure. "In his definitive Armstrong discography, *Louis Armstrong: All of Me*, Jos Willens writes that his data for the Bing and Satchmo album comes directly from the Project Records ledgers, which places them both in a Hollywood studio for the June 28-30 sessions and proves that the vocals were performed live with the orchestra contrary to statements by other discographers," he told us.

How then to explain the sterility of it all? Was one or other of Bing and Louis persuaded to record in a booth, perhaps because of the juxtaposition of

Armstrong's dual role as vocal and trumpet soloist? Or was it that this was, as Friedwald points out, "a full-scale production number", a world away from "crossing cadenzas" as Bing dubbed many a radio duet. It's worth noting too, in passing, that the Ella and Louis duet album that features in the list of 50, is equally barren, far removed from the spontaneity that had characterised their earlier outings on Decca. Until someone invents a time machine, we shall never know.

Before I leave the theme of duets, have you ever tried to list your five favourite Crosby duets? I hadn't and thought I would try before setting the challenge. It's not easy! But here, in no particular order are my five. Write or email yours.

1. Silver Bells - Bing with anybody, but preferably Ella.
2. Mr. Meadowlark - Bing with Johnny Mercer. The outtake is better than the final version!
3. A Kiss to Build a Dream On - Bing and Louis on radio, a Crosby solo that becomes an impromptu duet.
4. Basin St. Blues - Bing and Connee Boswell, and a minimalist, but oh so telling input from Bing.
5. Let's Be Buddies medley, Bing and Dinah Shore from TV in 1963 - the loosest you will ever see Bing.

Ken Crossland

ken54@blueyonder.co.uk

A Note from Australia

Graham Pascoe joins us again to offer some comments on our last issue.

STOP PRESS! BING CROSBY IN AUSSIE MEDIA.

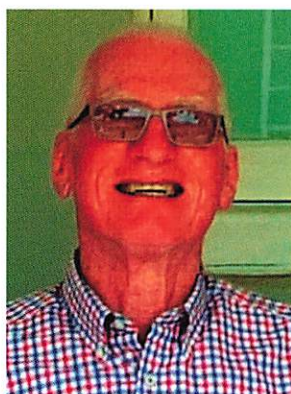
Bing Crosby is rarely mentioned in mainstream media in Australia but that changed on 15 May in an obituary for the late singer, actress Doris Day in our national daily newspaper *The Australian*. The first paragraph ended: 'For six years from 1959 she was one of the top box-office draws in American cinemas. Only Frank Sinatra or Bing Crosby could sell a song so well'. (The obituary continued for a full page and had originated in *The Times*).

Of course, there was a time when Australians couldn't get enough of Bing and the media was ready to respond. The period covered by Gary Giddins' new book exemplifies that. The two reviews in *BING* No.181 focus on America and one might wonder if the reviewers' comments about the period which Giddins labels 'The War Years' might also apply to Australia. By

1940 Australians had been able to see Bing's movies and buy many of his records but not all of the public and critics had been generous with their praise during the 1930s. Ted Gioia states that Bing 'dominated almost every facet of mainstream entertainment during this tumultuous period'. Could the same be said Down under?

In January 1940 two of Bing's records reached the Australian charts: 'Deep Purple' and 'Little Sir Echo'. In December 1946 'Whose Dream Are You?' entered the charts. It would be fair to conclude that between those months Bing Crosby had dominated the Australian record industry. One hundred and twenty Crosby songs had reached the Australian charts, 18 having reached the top position. Forty-six had been placed in the top twenty-five of their years. His closest rivals in those terms were Vera Lynn and Frank Sinatra who had 49 and 35 chart hits respectively.

As we know, World War II ended in 1945. The top songs of the year are listed in David Kent's *Australian Chart Book (1940-1969)*. In January 1945 the number one position was filled by 'Lili Marlene' performed by Geraldo and His Orchestra and by the Danish singer Lale Andersen. In the remaining eleven months the following Crosby records were number one: 'Amor' (February and March), 'Swinging on a Star' (April), 'Long Ago (and Far Away)' (May, with a version by Vera Lynn also), 'It Could Happen to You' (June and July, with a version by Dinah Shore as well as Bing), 'I'll Be Seeing You' (August, and also for Joe Loss), 'Don't Fence Me In' (September to November and rated as the overall top song of the year) and 'Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral' (December).



What of Bing on the big screen? Most of Bing's feature films in the 1930s and the war years were screened at Sydney's Prince Edward Theatre, known as 'the theatre beautiful'. From 1940, beginning with *The Star Maker*, to 1946, ending with *Duffy's Tavern*, nine Crosby films were shown there and six of them ran for five weeks or more. In 1945 *Going My Way* was screened for an amazing twenty-one weeks, easily the longest run at that theatre during those years. Fifty-seven non-Crosby feature (not supporting) films tempted patrons but only half (28 actually) lasted five weeks.

No Crosby film ran for less than three weeks but six of the 57 others were taken off before their third week. Furthermore, the critics were increasingly recognising that Bing Crosby had some talent as an actor rather than as a crooner who could serenade a leading lady and please those who liked his singing.

Australians could not tune in to *Kraft Music Hall* but in April 1934 radio station 3KZ in Melbourne had programmed *A Half Hour with Bing Crosby* at 11 pm. Almost certainly that was the first Australian radio program dedicated specifically to playing Bing Crosby records. In 1940 a Melbourne resident had a choice of seven radio stations and one which broadcast only from late night to early morning, two stations were offering programs which were devoted specifically to playing Bing's records for a total of twenty-five minutes each week. By 1946, five stations were doing that for almost five-and-a half hours weekly.

Terry Teachout's article 'The Swinging Star...' notes the effect that Bing had on soldiers. Australia's frontline troops didn't have the opportunity to see Bing perform in person but Bing's recording of 'White Christmas' was remembered by one veteran about sixty years after the war. Late in 1942 the Australian army was fighting Japanese forces at Milne Bay in tropical New Guinea and 'We heard Bing Crosby sing "White Christmas" a thousand times, and never got sick of it'. Writing in a Melbourne newspaper just after Bing's death in 1977 Geoffrey Wright, apparently a World War II veteran, commented, 'I have seen hardened men cry on hearing that song'.

Top o' the Morning was, in David Lobosco's opinion 'Not great, but pleasant enough' and I wondered how Australians had responded to this teaming of Bing and Barry Fitzgerald in 1949. Their previous *Welcome Stranger* had done moderately well here. Perhaps the appetites of some Australians to another Crosby-Fitzgerald partnership had been whetted in February when the *ABC Weekly's* Radio Roundabout column reported that the duo had played in a radio version of that film which had been broadcast in the USA in 1948.

Only two days after *Top o' the Morning* had its New York premiere, Melbourne audiences were able to see it at the State Theatre, the nation's largest cinema which seated more than 3,300 patrons, in September 1949. The sense of humour of Roberts Dunstan in the evening newspaper *The Herald* was evident as he wrote 'It's Mr Crosby himself, in Ireland ... Did you ever hear the like of it? ... Ah, but sure it does make us drunk to listen to him sing'. 'What harm is there in it?' he asked. Not much harm but not much pleasure, it seems, as it ran for only three weeks compared with four weeks for *Welcome Stranger*. Then it went to Sydney for four weeks at the Prince Edward (capacity about 1,300). Perhaps it was lucky to last that long because *The Sydney Morning Herald's* review was not complimentary: 'This is a mushy dish of synthetic Irish stew ... not even Bing's singing can do much for it'.

Like David, those two critics singled out Bing's singing for favourable comment and David notes that *Variety* predicted plenty of play for a couple of the Burke-Van Heusen songs. It was not until February 1950 that the Decca disc with the title song and 'The Four Winds and the Seven Seas' was released. It moved almost fourteen thousand records that year, a better-than-average result for 'the Old Groaner' at the time, but the latter song was the attraction topping the charts for three weeks, along with Sammy Kaye's HMV record with a vocal by Tony Alamo. Two months later 'You're in Love with Someone' with 'Make Believe You're Glad When You're Sorry' reached the shops but record buyers weren't in love with that record, buying less than ten thousand. Two other songs from the movie which Bing had recorded, 'Oh, 'Tis Sweet to Think' and 'The Donovans', were not pressed in Australia as singles.



David's favourite song in the movie was 'When Irish Eyes are Smiling' which, as he reminds us, Bing had recorded in 1946. It had been released here in December 1947, backed by 'It's the Same Old Shillelagh'. It remained in the catalogue until 1955, reaching sales of thirteen thousand, becoming the third-best-selling Crosby release from 1947. (Bing's biggest-seller from 1947 was 'McNamara's Band' and 'Dear Old Donegal' with total sales of almost thirty thousand. A great time for the Irish!)

It seems that David Lobosco has not kissed the Blarney stone. We know now that our editor has and provided us with the photographic evidence to prove it. (Brave man!) Just before *Top o' the Morning* was shown in Sydney *The Sunday Herald* included in its Notes on Films column an article titled 'Blarney stone for Bing' which was a thinly-disguised publicity item for the movie from Paramount. My own opinion of the film is much like David's: 'Not great, but pleasant enough'.

As one would expect, there are several references to other Crosby recordings in the last issue of *BING*. The previously-mentioned Terry Teachout expressed his special appreciation of 'Out of This World' so I wondered how that was appreciated in Australia. When the film critic of *The Sydney Morning Herald* reviewed

the film in which picture-goers heard Bing's voice as Eddie Bracken appeared to sing it, the conclusion was the film was 'notable only because it contains in its celluloid some recordings of Bing Crosby's voice, in songs which fans will endorse'. The Decca disc with 'Out of This World' and 'June Comes around Every Year' was released in March 1946, the month before the movie. The record reviewer in *The Listener* expected 'Bing with almost monotonous reliability will assuredly gain much approval with [these songs]'. That expectation proved correct. Both songs reached the charts for Bing (and for Tommy Dorsey) that month although its sales in 1946 did not quite reach four thousand but it remained available until 1951 with total sales of five thousand. As a matter of interest, the other record with 'I'd Rather Be Me' from the movie and an earlier recording of 'Would You?' had the doubtful honour of the smallest lifetime sales (4246) of all Crosby 1946 releases. Nevertheless, both songs made the charts.

Members who attended the Warrington branch meeting in December heard what Jason Liddiard described as rarities. Some of them could undoubtedly be described thus in Australia in that they did not appear on singles: 'Mele Kalikimaka', 'Just What I Wanted for Christmas', 'It's Christmas Time Again', 'Sleigh Ride', 'Snow' and 'The Littlest Angel'. We didn't even get the 1950 recording of 'Silver Bells' but our editor's favourite 'Do You Hear What I Hear?' was released here on Capitol, backed by 'Christmas Dinner Country Style'. Perhaps it's not surprising that the February 1935 recording of 'Silent Night, Holy Night' was not pressed in Australia as the St. Columban Missionary Society may have been unknown 'Down Under'. The November version got here in September 1936.

Henry Pleasants' article from 1976 on Bing the 'bel canto baritone' referred to Charles Henderson's advice to aspiring singers in 'How to sing for money'. He wouldn't have known that back in 1935 Australians (and others I expect) could buy *This Amazing Book on Crooning*. It was written by Al Bowlly. It would cost them six shillings and six pence plus six pence for postage, which was less than the price of two Crosby records at the time. What a bargain.

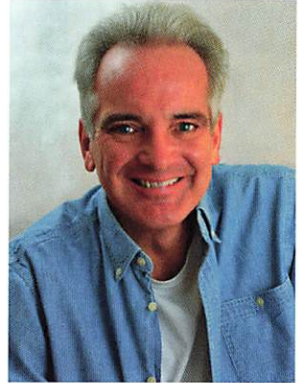
Graham Pascoe

gpascoe34@bigpond.com

(Editor: Graham continues to present his show 'Morning Music' on community radio station 2MCE-FM each Monday morning from 9 to 11 (Australian Eastern Time). Usually he plays recordings of popular music from the 1930s, 40s and 50s but he invariably plays a couple of Crosby recordings. The station broadcasts on 92.3 FM in Bathurst, New South Wales and its programmes are streamed (but not archived) on www.2mce.org.)

The 1957 Children's Albums

Jeremy Rose returns to our pages for an in-depth look at some of Bing's seldom mentioned recordings.



Bing's exclusive contract with Decca came to an end on December 31st 1955, concluding an artistic partnership which had begun on 8th August 1934 and which had – mainly in collaboration with producer Jack Kapp, who had died in March, 1949 – produced arguably the most successful and varied body of work in the history of recorded popular music. Although Bing was to sign a further three-year contract with Decca in June 1956, this was a non-exclusive deal, so he was also free to record for other companies.

The mid-to-late 50s were very much the era of the LP "concept" album, and although it could be argued that Bing never really took advantage of this trend in the same way that Sinatra did with his wonderful series of albums accompanied by Billy May and Nelson Riddle, there is surely no doubting the variety and quality of Bing's forays into this medium between 1956 and 1958. These three years gave us, *Songs I Wish I Had Sung (The First Time Around)*, *Bing Sings Whilst Bregman Swings*, *Bing with a Beat*, *Fancy Meeting You Here* and the recordings with the Buddy Cole and his trio which became *New Tricks*.

These albums account for the vast majority of Bing's studio time within these three years, but there are four albums which I haven't mentioned, and which often get overlooked in favour of their more popular studio-mates. These are the four children's stories, sung and narrated by Bing, which he recorded over two days on April 24th and 25th, 1957.

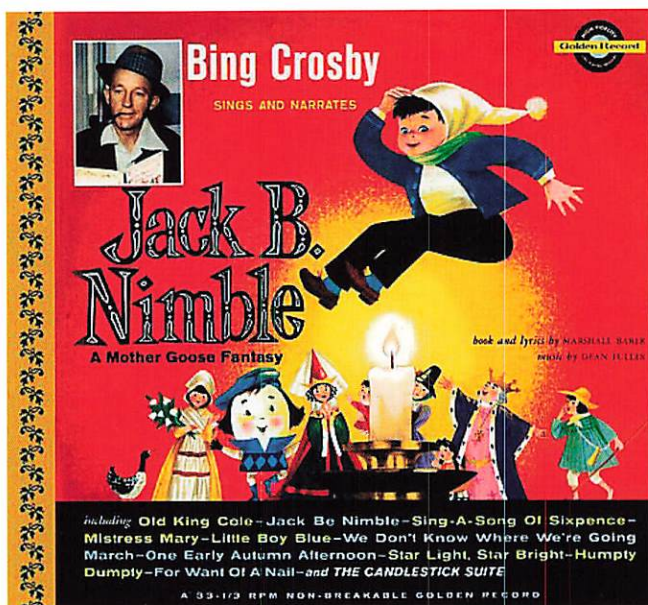
They were recorded for Golden Records, the children's music record label founded in 1948 by the Grammy-Award-winning producer Arthur Shimkin, who later went on to found Sesame Street Records. Golden Records was itself a subsidiary of the American publishing house Simon and Schuster Inc. The four stories were each allocated their own creative team of composers and lyricists as follows:

A Christmas Story - An Axe, An Apple and A Buckskin Jacket. Story and lyrics by Arnold Sundgaard. Music by Alec Wilder.

Sundgaard was known primarily as a playwright and opera librettist, providing the libretto for the 1951 Pulitzer Prize-winning opera *Giants in the Earth*, with music by Douglas Moore. As well as *A Christmas Story*, his work with composer Alec Wilder ranged from the

1952 opera *The Lowland Sea* to the song *Where Did You Go?*, featured on Sinatra's 1959 album *No One Cares*. He also wrote children's books, and in fact *A Christmas Story* is adapted from his own book *An Axe, An Apple and a Buckskin Jacket*.

Although largely self-taught as a composer, Alec Wilder took private lessons at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York in the 1920s, where one of his classmates was a young Mitch Miller, musical director on the children's albums project. Despite writing extensively in the classical genre – including eleven operas! – he is best known for his work in the popular field. He counted Frank Sinatra, Peggy Lee and Tony Bennett among his circle of friends and he contributed both music and lyrics to *I'll Be Around*, which was a hit for The Mills Brothers. He also wrote the definitive study, *American Popular Song: The Great Innovators, 1900-1950*, published in 1972.



Jack B. Nimble - A Mother Goose Fantasy.
Book and lyrics by Marshall Barer.
Music by Dean Fuller.

Although lyricist Marshall Barer's most-heard lyric is the theme song of the American cartoon character *Mighty Mouse*, his career encompassed working with some of the greatest song stylists of the 40s and 50s. In collaboration with composer Alec Wilder, he provided songs for, among others, Harry Belafonte, Sarah Vaughan and Nat "King" Cole. He also provided lyrics for a number of now largely forgotten Broadway shows, the most successful of which was the 1959 show, *Once Upon a Mattress*, a musical comedy version of the Hans Christian Andersen story, *The Princess and the Pea*. With music by Mary Rodgers, it achieved a reasonable Broadway run of 244 performances, but a subsequent London production closed after only 24 performances. At the time of *Jack B. Nimble*, Barer was under contract to Golden Records, so it would have been completely logical for him to be involved in the Crosby project...

I haven't been able to uncover much biographical information on composer Dean Fuller, but he is

credited – wearing a different hat – with collaborating on the book for *Once Upon a Mattress*. As a composer, and with Marshall Barer as lyricist, he contributed to the Broadway revues, *Once Over Lightly*, starring Zero Mostel, in 1955, *New Faces of 1956*, featuring a young British actress named Maggie Smith, (I wonder what became of her...?) and the 1957 *Ziegfeld Follies* starring Beatrice Lillie. Fuller also acted as musical director and arranger for Tallulah Bankhead's only cabaret appearances, at the Sands Hotel in Las Vegas in the early 1950s.



Ali Baba and the 40 Thieves 40.
Lyrics by Sammy Cahn. Music by Mary Rodgers.

One of the legends of 20th Century popular song, lyricist Sammy Cahn (1913-1993) was nominated for an Academy Award no fewer than 31 times, winning on 4 occasions in the 1950s, for *Three Coins in the Fountain*, *All the Way*, *High Hopes* and *Call Me Irresponsible*, all but one of which with music by Cahn's long-time collaborator – and the man responsible for penning some of Bing's greatest successes – Jimmy Van Heusen. (The music for *Three Coins...* was by Jule Styne.) Throughout the 50s, Cahn and Van Heusen produced a string of hits on the Capitol label for the man whom Cahn himself described as, "...the enduring and perhaps the most satisfying relationship of my lyric writing career – Frank Sinatra".

Mary Rodgers was the daughter of legendary Broadway composer Richard Rodgers. She began writing music at the age of 16, but her professional career began when she started writing songs for Little Golden Records, a branch of Golden Records, and this led to the collaboration with Bing on *Ali Baba...* She enjoyed modest success on Broadway, with her greatest success being the aforementioned *Once Upon a Mattress*. She continued writing songs with lyricist Marshall Barer for almost a decade after *Mattress* and produced several other shows and revues but eventually abandoned music in favour of writing children's books. As she said later in life, "I had a pleasant talent but not an incredible talent... I wasn't my father... And you have to abandon all kinds of things."

***Never Be Afraid.* Lyrics by Marilyn Keith and Alan Bergman. Music by Lew Spence.**

The year after *Never Be Afraid*, Marilyn Keith became Mrs Alan Bergman and together they went on to become one of the most successful lyric-writing teams of the second half of the twentieth century, picking up two Academy Awards and numerous other awards and honours along the way. In the early part of their careers, they worked regularly with *Never Be Afraid* composer Lew Spence, writing songs such as the title tracks for Dean Martin's 1958 album, *Sleep Warm* and Sinatra's 1960 album, *Nice 'n' Easy*. They enjoyed long professional relationships with the composer Michel Legrand and the singer and actress Barbra Streisand, winning their first Academy Award for the English lyrics to Legrand's *The Windmills of Your Mind* from the 1968 movie, *The Thomas Crown Affair* and their second for their lyrics to Legrand's music for Streisand's 1983 movie, *Yentl*.

Composer Lew Spence (1920-2008) never repeated the success of *Nice 'n' Easy*, but his song *That Face*, with lyrics by the Bergmans, was introduced by Fred Astaire and subsequently recorded by Rosemary Clooney, Streisand and Mel Tormé. In the 1980s a projected Broadway musical with music by Spence and lyrics by Burton Lane never came to fruition.

Although recorded in the same two sessions on April 24th and 25th, the children's story recordings were issued in two pairs a few months apart, with *Ali Baba...* and *A Christmas Story* appearing in October 1957 and *Jack B. Nimble* and *Never Be Afraid* following in February 1958. They were issued by Golden Records in co-operation with Bing Crosby Enterprises and appeared simultaneously in various formats and various edited editions – presumably to maximise potential sales. LPs, EPs, singles, 78s (which by 1957/58 were very much on the way out as a format) and even on “phonocards” – the promotional cardboard discs developed and introduced by Bing Crosby Enterprises in 1955.

There has been some confusion about the identity of the musical director for the sessions. The sleeves of different issues contain different and often contradictory information. There is a chorus and orchestra present on all four albums, with some sleeves stating – where a conductor is mentioned at all – that they are conducted by one Arthur Norman and others crediting Mitch Miller with the conducting honours. I haven't been able to find out anything at all about “Arthur Norman”, but Mitch Miller is very much a known musical quantity.

Mitchell “Mitch” Miller (1911-2010) was a classically trained oboist and conductor (I have a fine recording of the Vaughan Williams oboe concerto with Miller as the soloist) who, during a very long career, was involved in virtually every aspect of the music and recording industries. He is probably best remembered today – for better or for worse! – for the *Sing Along with Mitch* series of albums featuring his own orchestra and chorus, which spawned a successful

TV series in the US which ran from 1961 through to 1964. At the time of Bing's children's albums, Miller's orchestra and chorus – *The Sandpiper Singers* – are known to have worked for Golden Records on other projects, so I think it's pretty safe to assume that Mitch Miller was in charge of all four sessions.

How Lovely Is Christmas was recorded on 24th April with the other three titles being laid down the following day. On certain LP releases of the shortest tales in the sequence – *Jack B. Nimble* and *Never Be Afraid* – side 2 contains a purely orchestral suite based on the respective musical themes from these albums, and I wonder whether these were recorded on 24th April, which would account for there being only one vocal session on that day... The individual tales have a running time of between 15 and 20-or-so minutes and all have a mix of spoken narration and musical numbers, with sparing but on-the-whole effective use of sound effects. (Listening on headphones, it's also possible to hear Bing turning the pages of his script on occasion!)

In the relevant volume of the invaluable *The Crosby Collection*, Fred Reynolds gives very detailed summaries of each of the tales together with his own views on the somewhat dubious moral conclusions that could be drawn from at least one of the stories! I don't intend to do either of those things in this article, but will give a brief *précis* of each tale, together with a run-down of the musical numbers.



An alternate release of “A Christmas Story”.

A Christmas Story relates the tale of a family living in the wilderness of Western Kentucky in the mid-19th century. It is Christmas Eve, and while his parents are away from home taking eggs to exchange for produce at the local store, their son Jethro hopes to surprise them by enlarging the small clearing next to the family cabin to make room for a garden where an apple tree could be planted. His father's axe is too heavy for him

to wield, however, and that, together with a heavy snowstorm, put paid to his attempts. He wishes he had a magic axe to complete the task and adds an apple and a buckskin jacket “with fringes” to his Christmas wish-list. As the snowstorm worsens, Jethro is visited by three iconic characters from American myth and history – Paul Bunyan, Johnny Appleseed and Daniel Boone – who respectively present him with the items on his list. When Jethro awakens on Christmas morning, he realises it has all been a dream, but around the Christmas tree he finds three presents from his parents which turn out to be – guess what...?!

A Christmas Story is musically topped-and-tailed by a very attractive number in 3/4 time called, *How Lovely Is Christmas*, which was assigned a separate master number for issue as a single. Vocalist Betty Mulliner takes the rôle of Jethro in a musical rendering of the Christmas wish-list, *An Axe, an Apple and a Buckskin Jacket*. Mulliner had worked with Mitch Miller on an album of religious songs released by Golden Records, and with fellow vocalist Bob Norman she released a single of *Sam's Song* and *Play a Simple Melody*. (Although billed as Betty Mulliner here, I wonder if this is the same vocalist who, as Betty Mullin, duetted with Bing on the 1950 sides, *Here Ends the Rainbow* and *With This Ring I Thee Wed...*?) Bing has a wistful number entitled *Boy at a Window*, expressing Jethro's hopes and dreams, and he also represents each of the respective gift-bearers in, *Young Jethro Swung His Mighty Axe*, *Johnny Appleseed* and *Incident on Roger's Creek* before the closing reprise of, *How Lovely Is Christmas*.

Billed as, “A Mother Goose Fantasy”, *Jack B. Nimble* is a nursery-rhyme based tale in which our narrator, Mr Crosby, encounters a nameless boy who is in search of the piper who had once played him a tune, the words of which hold the key to the boy's name. The boy had parted with his last three pennies to hear it three times, but the piper disappeared before the boy had a chance to learn the words of the tune. Our narrator agrees to accompany the boy on his quest, and before long they find themselves in the courtyard of the Gingerbread Castle, where Old King Cole is throwing a party. None of the revellers know the boy's tune but they happily join in the search. Despite further discouragement, they eventually hear the piper's tune in the distance and see a flaming candle in a candlestick standing in the grass. Prompted, by the crowd, Jack suddenly realises that his perseverance has been rewarded and, true to his newly-found name, he jumps over the candlestick.

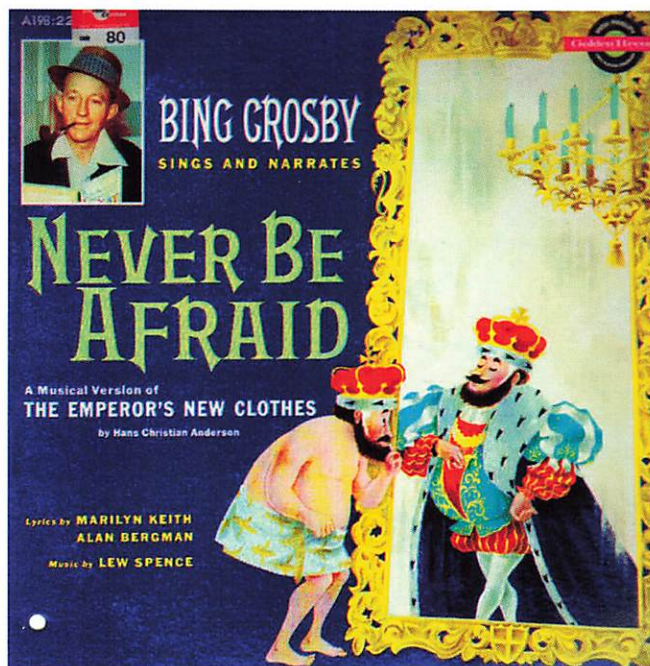
Having established the *leitmotif* of the piper's tune, the main plot points of the story are laid out by Mr Crosby's narrator in the sad little *One Early Autumn Afternoon*. On arrival at the Gingerbread Castle a medley of nursery rhymes is sung by Bing and the chorus, who also sing the marching song *We Don't Know Where We're Going* as they all set off on their quest. In an attempt to lift the boy's flagging spirits, Bing and chorus sing *For Want of a Nail* before Bing makes a solo plea for the boy's wish to come true in *Starlight, Star Bright*. The inevitable happy ending

is celebrated with Bing and chorus singing *Jack B. Nimble*.

Even in its re-telling for a young audience of the familiar tale from the collection of Arabian fairy tales, *The Thousand and One Nights*, *Ali Baba and the 40 Thieves* 40 still retains the elements which cause Fred Reynolds to refer to it as, “...this amoral and unwholesome tale...”! Poor Persian woodcutter Ali Baba lives a life of grinding poverty, struggling to provide for his wife and son. One day, whilst gathering wood in the forest, Ali hears a band of robbers approaching and quickly takes cover in a tree, from where he overhears the secret chant which gains access to the cave the robbers use as their hideout. Once they have departed, Ali uses the chant – “Open Sesame” – to enter the cave, which he finds stuffed with the robbers' ill-gotten treasure. He helps himself to as much as he can carry and hurries home to his wife and son. Ali's rich, selfish brother Kassim is intrigued by Ali's new-found wealth and persuades Ali to reveal the secret of the cave. Kassim rushes off, but having entered the cave and taken as much treasure as he can carry, he realises that he has forgotten the magic chant which will allow him to leave the cave and he is trapped inside, where he is discovered by the robbers. They kill him and hang his mutilated body outside the cave as a warning to others. Meanwhile, Ali's son has fallen in love with Morgiana, one of the household servants, but she is worried that her lowly status means they will never make a suitable match. Having discovered that Ali knows their secret, the robbers arrive at his house, with their leader disguised as a wealthy oil merchant and the robbers concealed in large oil jars – a supposed gift for Ali. Morgiana overhears the robbers in the jars and pours boiling oil into each jar, killing the robbers. She sees the robber chief about to kill Ali with his sword and takes a carving knife from the dining table and plunges it into the chief's heart. Morgiana and Ali's son are united and everyone – as the saying goes – lives happily ever after!

Ali Baba... is the most substantial and musically developed of the four tales, with Bing singing solos allocated to several of the main characters and the male chorus representing the robbers. *Year In, Year Out* illustrates the grinding poverty of Ali's existence, but in true fairy-tale style, this is tempered by his eternal optimism and *My Own Individual Star* demonstrates his conviction that fate will one day change his fortunes. *We're Forty Thieves*, *Forty* introduces the band of robbers, after which Bing introduces the “Open Sesame” motif. An extended version of *My Own Individual Star* shows Ali's gratitude for his new-found wealth, while Kassim's jealousy is given vent in *One Rich Brother*. Ali's son reassures Morgiana of his love for her in *I Love You Whoever You Are*. Bing sings a brief reprise of *One Rich Brother*, this time in the rôle of Ali. Bing and the chorus round off proceedings with a rousing *They All Lived Happily Ever After* finale.

Never Be Afraid is a re-telling of the well-known fable of “The Emperor's New Clothes”, a moralistic tale of excessive pomp and vanity pricked by childlike innocence and naïveté.



The Emperor spends all his money on clothes and neglects his duties by admiring himself in the mirror for hours at a time. Two con-men, posing as weavers, devise a plan to swindle the Emperor by telling him that they can weave the most beautiful cloth in the world – a cloth with magic in every stitch, which means that it cannot be seen by a fool. The Emperor decides he must have a suit made from this cloth so that he can distinguish the fools from the wise men amongst his advisers. He pays the swindlers a lot of money and they go off to begin “weaving”. The Emperor sends his Minister to check on progress, but although he can, of course, see no cloth he was afraid to say so and reports back that the cloth is wonderful. More gold is paid to the swindlers and more officials visit, all of them reassuring the Emperor that it is the most beautiful cloth they have ever seen. When the Emperor finally visits the weavers, he is too ashamed to admit that he can see nothing and declares that he will wear a suit made from the cloth in a grand parade. On the day of the parade, a great crowd gathers to see the Emperor, everyone saying how wonderful he looks. Everyone except one little boy, who cries out, “But he has nothing on,” The crowd take up the cry and the Emperor eventually realises what they are saying is true, and speaks to the child. “You are right, child, and we were all fools for being afraid to say what we knew to be true”.

Bing only has two solo numbers in this tale, with other parts being taken by members of the chorus. *The Best Dressed Man in the World* reveals the vanity of the Emperor. The weavers and the Minister are represented by chorus members in *We'll Weave, We'll Weave* and *It Cannot Be* respectively. The full chorus sings *Fit for a King* before Bing reprises *The Best Dressed Man in the World* and Bing's rendition of *Never Be Afraid* neatly expresses the moral of the tale.

Listening to these tales again and again for the purposes of this article, I've been increasingly impressed with them. It has to be said that none of the songs represents the best of the various writers' output, but they are all

expertly crafted and perfectly suited to the material. There is never any sense that they are in any way talking down to their young audience, and that goes very much for Bing's narration too. Throughout all four tales, he sounds avuncular, involved and totally committed to the stories he's telling.

The production values are consistently high, with inventive and colourful arrangements and excellent orchestral playing and choral singing.

As I mentioned earlier, the four tales were originally issued in various editions and formats, and amassing a complete set of all those releases would make an interesting niche collection for a very dedicated Crosby completist! With the exception of *Never Be Afraid*, all of the tales have appeared on “official” CD labels at one time or another. My copy of *Jack B. Nimble* is a 2009 release on the Shout Factory label, *A Christmas Story* a 2005 release on Drive Entertainment and *Ali Baba...* a 2010 Sepia release which also features the London cast recording of the Barer/Rodgers musical, *Once Upon a Mattress*.

As far as I can ascertain, *Never Be Afraid* has never had an “official” CD release. The two Bing numbers appear on the privately-circulated *Take A Longer Look* album on the Harry Lillis label, however, and the discography accessible via the Crosby Fan World web-site informs me that all four tales were issued in 2000 on a privately circulated CD entitled “Bing Sings and Narrates ‘How Lovely is Christmas’”.

Again with the exception of *Never Be Afraid*, all of the tales are available to stream on YouTube. I have been unable to locate *Never Be Afraid* on-line. I thought I had found it on the Spotify streaming service, but when I tried to play it, a “recording unavailable” banner appeared. I wonder if it's a rights issue... Lyricists Marilyn and Alan Bergman are very much still with us and presumably hold the copyright.

It's been a great pleasure exploring this often-neglected corner of Bing's recorded output, but as always this article wouldn't have been possible without extensive reference to the amazing discographical work undertaken by various Crosby aficionados down the decades, so this is my usual vote of sincere thanks to Messrs Baker, Bassett, Bishop, Currington, Macfarlane, Reilly, Reynolds and Wiggins..!

Jeremy Rose

(Editor: That was certainly a tour de force by Jeremy. Probably few of us listen to the complete stories very often but there were some great solos by Bing which are really worth a regular play. I'm thinking of “How Lovely Is Christmas”, “I Love You Whoever You Are”, “Never Be Afraid” and “My Own Individual Star”, all of which were issued as singles.)



Bing on the Box

Malcolm Macfarlane surveys the TV and radio scene of the last four months.

TV highlights - USA & Canada

Bing's films and other items seen on TV since our last issue was prepared were:

Carol Burnett Show	Me TV
High Society	TCM
High Time	FXM
Hollywood Rivals	WAVE
Let's Make Love	TCM
My Favorite Brunette	TCM



Martin McQuade spotted that the Carol Burnett Show from November 10, 1969 with Bing and Ella Fitzgerald as guests was due to be shown on Me TV on June 10. I circulated a number of members as this show has rarely been seen but sadly we were to be disappointed as Martin duly reported.

"There was only one Bing segment, a comedy sketch in a restaurant involving Carol as a sycophantic waitress serving him. Harvey Korman was Bing's lunch partner. This featured a Hope cameo. No musical numbers whatsoever. Bing returned with the entire cast at the very end for "bows." The sketch is funny and Bing looks great. However, I would have loved to have seen the "Flattery" duet with Carol and the medley with Ella."



With Ella on the Carol Burnett Show.

Greg Van Beek had warned me in advance that "these shows that were originally one hour have been edited down to 25 minutes. All of the music numbers are cut so we won't see that classic Bing / Ella Paramount Pictures medley. Maybe if we're lucky the diner sketch with Bing and Bob Hope (in a cameo) will remain in. I wanted to see the Carol Burnett episode with Perry Como also from 1969 a few weeks back and all that remained of Perry was him coming out at the very end of the show and signing Carol's autograph book! Very disappointing."

USA & Canadian Radio

Arne Fogel's long-running weekly radio program "The Bing Shift" continues on Sundays at 8 p.m. (CST) on KBEM-FM "JAZZ 88" (88.5 FM) in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota. It can now be accessed on demand at <http://www.jazz88.fm/show/the-bing-shift/> and it's always enjoyable with an eclectic selection. Arne is an excellent and knowledgeable presenter and his program should not be missed. As an example, here's the playlist for his June 9th broadcast:

I'm Wingin' Home – I'm an Old Cowhand – By the Light of the Silvery Moon – Secret Love – River, Stay 'Way From My Door – The Only Way to Go – I'm Thru with Love – Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue – Shadows of Love – The Day You Came Along – So Much in Love – Embraceable You – Alabamy Bound (1975) – I've Got to Pass Your House – Don't Worry About Tomorrow – I've a Shooting Box in Scotland –

Greg Van Beek's weekly radio series Nostalgia Radio Time on 1420 AM WJUB and on Live365 station 920 WON: The Apple has continued its long run on Saturday nights starting at 9 pm (CST) / 10 pm (ET). Greg always has a "Bing Sings" segment in the hour-long program. On Easter Saturday, Greg went a step further when he included the whole of Bing's Philco show from April 7, 1948 with Fred Astaire and Peggy Lee as the guests. Greg's birthday tribute to Bing on his May 4 broadcast was excellent too and contained the following:

Where or When - When The Red, Red Robin / I Only Have Eyes For You (with Al Jolson) - Quizas, Quizas, Quizas - I Kiss Your Hand Madame - The Folks Who Live on the Hill - Because of You - Saturday Night Is the Loneliest Night of the Week - Don't Let the Stars Get in Your Eyes - It's Not for Me to Say - And the Angels Sing - Everything Is Beautiful - Frenesi - Two Shadows on the Sand - Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da - My Prayer - You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby - Sing (with Fred Astaire) - There's Nothing I Haven't Sung About (1977).

You can catch Greg online at the www.1420thebreeze.com site and you can listen to the previous two weeks shows on Greg's podcast at nostalgiaradiotime.podomatic.com.

Crosby Internet Radio has continued to broadcast 24/7 with a wide variety of shows including Arne Fogel's excellent "Bing Shift" programs. The shows change on a monthly basis with the 15-minute 1954-56 show typically running throughout the day with other programs such as the KMH, Philco, Chesterfield and GE shows being interleaved every hour or so. The Crosby-Clooney shows are used frequently too.

Jason Liddiard mentioned Crooner Radio earlier in this issue and this Rancho Mirage, California based station can be found at <http://www.croonerradio.com/> and it plays a very nice selection of songs you are bound to like.

The 77th anniversary of Bing's first recording of "White Christmas" was prominently noted in the media and Kevin Bartholomew on radio station WCMT Radio (Martin, TN) seized on this by phoning Anton Garcia-Fernandez at breakfast time on May 29. Anton responded very well to the surprise call and gave the background to the recording as well as getting in a useful plug for the ICC. He said that he always used to wonder why Bing sang "I'm dreaming of a white Christmas" and he explained how he had later discovered the rarely heard verse and then it all made sense.

TV highlights - UK

Crosby items seen since our last issue was prepared were:

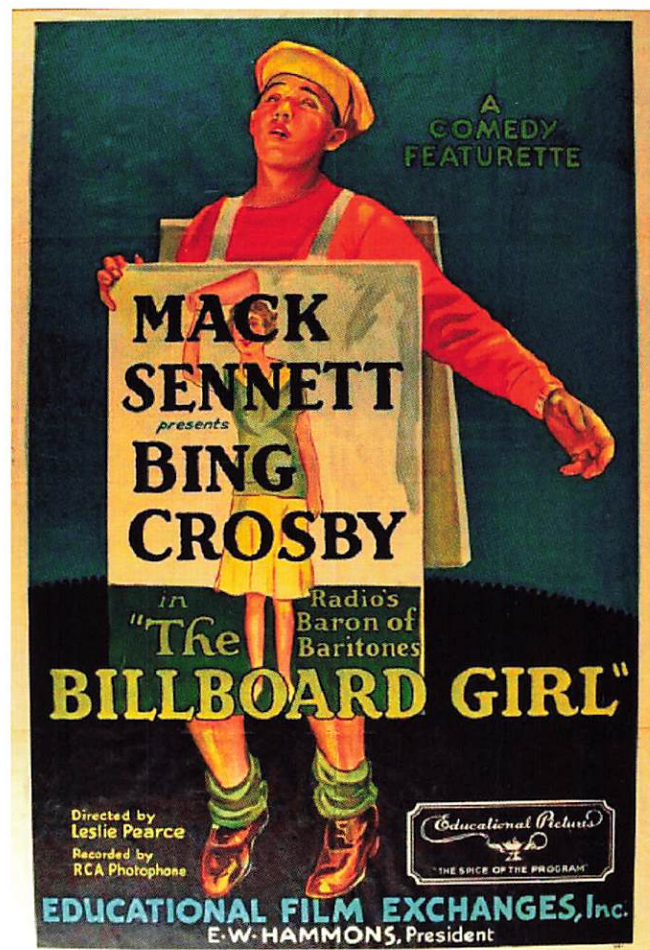
Bring on Bing	Talking Pictures
Discovering Bing Crosby	Sky Arts

We know *Bring on Bing* as an edited version of the Sennett short *The Billboard Girl* which was filmed in 1931 and released in March 1932. When *The Billboard Girl* was released *Film Daily* commented:

A Featurette Comedy with Bing Crosby. Bing falls in love with a billboard girl he has never met, and finally meets up with her in a college town where she attends the co-ed institution. The girl's brother dresses up like his sister and has Bing do a pash love scene with all the class as hidden audience. The girl also hidden, sees it, and falls in love with Bing's singing. Business of parental opposition and also a big goof who is engaged to the girl, but love triumphs. The comedy is fair, but the singer's crooning puts it over.

(*Film Daily*, March 6, 1932)

Bing sang "Were You Sincere", a parody of "Pop Goes the Weasel" and "For You". Unfortunately, *Bring on Bing* was an abridged version released by Astor Pictures in 1935. The opening minutes were missing making nonsense of the story. It was in poor condition too and Bing's first version of "For You" was missing. A great pity.



UK Radio

The National Presenters

Songs played on the BBC national networks (Radio2 unless stated) of which we were aware over the last four months were:

Clare Teal: I Found a Million Dollar Baby (Mar. 31) – Now You Has Jazz (Mar. 31) (these songs were part of Clare's regular feature "Without That, You Wouldn't Have This" which started with songs by John McCormack and Al Jolson) – (Get Your Kicks on) Route 66 (May 19)

Elaine Paige on Sunday: Razzle Dazzle (Mar. 31)

Ken Bruce: I'll Be Seeing You (Richard Carpenter's "Tracks of My Years" June 14 - Carpenter said "If I had to pick one pop song" - and "It gives me goose bumps every time I hear it")

Essential Classics: (Radio 3) – Gone Fishin' (May 13)

In Tune Mixtape: (Radio 3) – Now You Has Jazz (June 6)

Jazz Junctions: (Radio 6) – Some of These Days (May 9)

The Local Radio Presenters

We owe a huge debt to some of the local presenters who play Bing so regularly. Pride of place must go to **Gerald Jackson** who continues to use his two programmes on local radio - "Unforgettable" on Radio Lancashire on Sunday evenings at 8 p.m. and the other, the similarly named "Gerald Jackson: Unforgettable" on Radio Manchester on Sunday nights at 10pm to play our man frequently. Our member Margaret White regularly has her requests played. Among the songs heard were:

McNamara's Band (Mar. 3) – Isle of Innisfree (Mar. 17) – Little Lady Make Believe (Mar. 24) – You Are My Sunshine (Mar. 31) – That's What Life Is All About (Apr. 7) – The Isle of Innisfree (Apr. 14) – Easter Parade (Apr. 21) – True Love (Apr. 21) – The Second Time Around (May 5) – You'll Never Know (May 5) – How Can You Buy Killarney (May 19) – On a Slow Boat to China (May 26) – You Made Me Love You (Jun. 2) – Ol' Man River (Jun. 2) – Bless 'Em All (Jun. 2 & 16) – You Belong to My Heart (Jun. 2) – Danny Boy (Jun. 16) – The Bells of St. Mary's (Jun. 16)

BBC Radio Lincolnshire's **Howard Leader** has a programme of big band swing and balladeers which goes out each Sunday afternoon and Bing is featured often. For example:

Do You Ever Think of Me (Mar. 3) – Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive (Mar. 10) – At the Jazz Band Ball – Blue Hawaii (with Connie Haines) – I Can't Get Started (Mar. 31) – Love Thy Neighbour – Don't Get Around Much Anymore (Apr. 14) – Pennies from Heaven (12" version) – All You Want to Do Is Dance (Test) – You Belong to My Heart – Let's Sing Like the Dixieland Band – Don't Fence Me In – Deep Purple (May 5)

Bill Rennells' **Harmony Night** show with Al Ryan on BBC local radio stations throughout the South East of England and on the Internet is another presenter who is very happy to play Bing in response to requests.

You Are My Sunshine (Mar. 10) – If I Had My Way (Mar. 10) – Memories (for our member Ian Lawrence) – True Love (Mar. 24) – I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen (Apr. 14) – Galway Bay – Now Is the Hour (Jun. 2) – Gone Fishin' (Jun. 2) – Only Forever (Jun. 9) – Gone Fishin' (Jun. 16)

Kelly-Anne Smith's Easy Sunday show on BBC Coventry & Warwickshire plays our kind of music and Bing songs played include:

True Love (Mar. 31) – Ain't Misbehavin' (Apr. 21) – Swinging on a Star (May 12) – Sam's Song (Jun. 2) – (Love Is) The Tender Trap (Jun. 9) – Count Your Blessings Instead of Sheep (Jun. 23)

The BBC website has details of the Crosby songs used in the last four months and other shows playing a fair number of Bing tracks are shown below. Do please support these presenters, and those mentioned above, with requests and feedback.

Beverley Humphreys presents *Beverley's World of Music* (BBC Radio Wales) – Zing a Little Zong (Mar. 3) – Too Marvellous for Words (Mar. 3) – Gone Fishin' (Mar. 10) – Mountain Greenery (Mar. 17) – Dear Hearts and Gentle People (Apr. 14) – Road to Morocco (Apr. 14) – On the Sunny Side of the Street (Apr. 21) – Busy Doing Nothing (Apr. 28) – Gone Fishin' (May 26)

David Allen: (BBC Radio Surrey) – Blacksmith Blues (Mar. 30) – That's What Life Is All About (Apr. 20) – True Love (May 11) – That's What Life Is All About (May 25) – How Are Things in Glocca Morra (Jun. 8) – True Love (Jun. 15)

Eamon Friel: (Radio Ulster) – Along the Way to Waikiki (May 2) – Let a Smile Be Your Umbrella (May 2) – Far Away Places (Jun. 6)

Roy Noble: (BBC Radio Wales) – Come Rain or Come Shine (May 12) – Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive (Jun. 9) – Ain't Misbehavin' (Jun. 16)

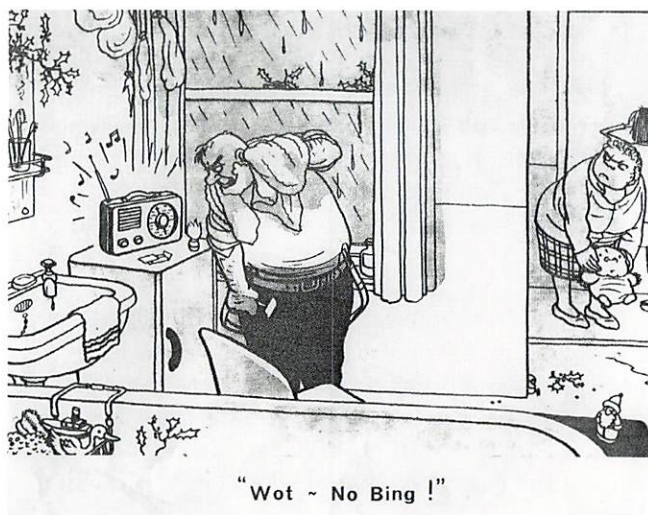
Serenade Radio

We have mentioned this on-line radio station based in Lincoln in England in the past. It was born out of a desperate need to hear those great songs from that golden era of song writing. Not just the occasional one-off song, lost in a sea of pop mediocrity, but all day every day. One of the presenters is ICC member John Walton who broadcasts his weekly Crooner's Club on Fridays at 12 noon. It's well worth a listen. You can catch the station at:

<http://www.serenade-radio.com>

Malcolm Macfarlane

macwilmslo@aol.com



Once in a While

Personalities associated with Bing who have left us since our last issue was prepared include:

Doris Day, the legendary actress and singer died on May 13 at the good age of 97. Starting out as a band singer, she became a top recording artist having many chart successes including six number one hits. As an actress, she became the top female box-office star of all-time and she starred in her own TV series for 5 years.

She was born Doris Mary Ann Von Kappelhoff on April 3, 1922 in Cincinnati, Ohio to Alma Welz (a housewife) and William Kappelhoff (a music teacher and choir master). All of her grandparents were German immigrants.

Miss Von Kappelhoff was the youngest of three children and she had two brothers: Richard, who died at the age of 2 before Doris's birth, and Paul, a few years older (who died in 1957). Her parents' marriage failed when Doris was about twelve, owing to her father's reported infidelity. Doris developed an early interest in dance, and in the mid-1930s she formed a dance duo with a lad called Jerry Dougherty and they performed locally in Cincinnati. Tragedy struck however when a car accident on October 13, 1937 (she was 15 at the time), badly crushed her right leg and curtailed her prospects as a professional dancer.

Her leg was in plaster for many months. While recovering and bored out of her mind, Doris started to sing along with the radio and discovered a talent for singing. Her mother was impressed and arranged singing lessons with a local teacher. Doris soon picked up a job as a singer in a Chinese restaurant and also sang on local radio before being spotted by bandleader Barney Rapp. He gave her the name of Doris Day as he thought Kappelhoff was too long for a billboard and he liked the way she sang "Day by Day".

After working with Rapp, Doris worked briefly with a number of other band-leaders including Bob Crosby and Les Brown. After a short spell with Les Brown, she married Al Jorden one of the musicians in Barney Rapp's band in 1941. She became pregnant and she retired from show business to be a wife and mother. Unfortunately Jorden turned out to be a physically abusive husband and after the birth of their son Terry, Doris instituted divorce proceedings. She needed money so her mother agreed to look after Terry and Doris went back to work with Les Brown as a band singer.

They toured around all over the USA for several years and Doris made a number of recordings with the band including "Sentimental Journey" which gave her a number one hit in 1945. It was top of the charts for nine weeks and it almost became an anthem of the desire of World War II demobilizing troops to return home. Doris (as vocalist with the Les Brown Band) had four Top Ten Hits on the Billboard charts. These included: "My Dreams Are Getting Better All the Time", "Till the End of Time", and "I Got the Sun in the Morning".



With Les Brown.

With this level of success, it was inevitable that she would go solo and she did. She got married again in 1946, to another musician named George Weidler but sadly the marriage did not last for more than 2 or 3 years. After her separation from her second husband, Doris apparently intended to leave Los Angeles and return to her mother's home in Cincinnati. Her agent Al Levy convinced her to attend a party at the home of composer Jule Styne. At the party, she sang "Embraceable You" which really impressed Mr. Styne and his partner, Sammy Cahn. They recommended her for a starring role in a film called *Romance on the High Seas*, which they were working on for Warner Brothers. One of her songs in the film – "It's Magic" – became a huge hit and she soon had another No. 1 record – "Love Somebody" with Buddy Clark. Doris made her first LP and she became a regular on Bob Hope's top-rated radio show for nearly two years travelling to many Forces locations with him. She developed a fear of flying because of one or two anxious moments flying with the Bob Hope entourage.

She made a record with Frank Sinatra and guested on his radio show as well as on Al Jolson's Kraft Music Hall on several occasions. Doris was really going places and then Warner Brothers signed her to a 7-year film contract and she started making three films a year. One of her early films was *Young Man with a Horn* with Kirk Douglas which enabled her to show how her acting was developing.

She married again in 1951 to Marty Melcher, who became her Manager and adopted her son Terry.



Acting in Young Man and a Horn with Kirk Douglas.

She made a number of popular films with Gordon MacRae: *Tea for Two*, *By the Light of the Silvery Moon* and *On Moonlight Bay*. In these films, she started to show that she could dance pretty well despite her previous injury. Doris appeared with James Cagney in *The West Point Story* and then with Danny Thomas in *I'll See You in My Dreams* which was the story of the songwriter Gus Kahn. Apart from musicals, she had more dramatic parts such as *Storm Warning* where she didn't sing at all and died on film. Then in 1953, came one of her best films, *Calamity Jane*. She gave an extraordinary singing and acting performance and the song "Secret Love" from the film topped the charts and won the Academy Award for Best Original Song. Doris filmed *Young at Heart* with Frank Sinatra and then she chose not to renew her contract with Warner Brothers. She decided to work under the advice and management of her third husband, Marty Melcher. She took on more dramatic roles, including her 1955 portrayal of singer Ruth Etting in *Love Me or Leave Me*. Doris described it as being her best film and she gave a wonderful performance as an actress and as a singer.

In 1956 Doris made a film for Alfred Hitchcock called *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. The story involved the kidnap of Doris's screen son. She and her screen husband, played by James Stewart, go to an Embassy in London where they think their son is being held. Doris is asked to sing "Whatever Will Be, Will Be (Que Sera, Sera)" to the assembled diplomats and she does so at the top of her voice in the hope that her son will hear her. It was a very dramatic scene and the commercial recording of the song topped the charts and won an Academy Award for Best Original Song as well as becoming her signature tune. She made some great LPs around this time too and she played another dramatic role in *Julie* with Louis Jourdan. During the filming Doris felt ill and was hemorrhaging quite badly. Marty and Doris were both practicing

Christian Scientists, and she refused to see a doctor. After filming ended, she finally consulted a medical professional and had to have a large tumour removed and a hysterectomy. Back to full health in due course, she starred in *The Pajama Game* with John Raitt.



As Ruth Etting in Love Me or Leave Me.

There was another top-selling album, a film with Clark Gable called *Teacher's Pet* and then in 1959, she made a film with Rock Hudson called *Pillow Talk*. This represented a change of direction for Doris who was then in her mid-to-late thirties. Her role in a sophisticated rom-com brought Doris her only Academy Award nomination.

Movies with David Niven and Rex Harrison followed and then some more sophisticated rom-coms such as *Lover Come Back* with Rock Hudson again, *That Touch of Mink* with Cary Grant and *The Thrill of It All* with James Garner. But she hadn't forsaken musicals completely. A film called *Jumbo* with Stephen Boyd and Jimmy Durante had some great Rodgers & Hart songs. But what the public wanted from Doris were more sophisticated comedies and she duly obliged.

In *Move Over Darling* she played a character who has been marooned on a desert island for 5 years and returns to find that her husband has remarried assuming that she was dead. Again it was a very successful film indeed.

Doris Day was one of the top ten box office stars eight years in a row from 1959-1966 including four years as the number one box office star.

By the late 1960s, public attitudes about sex were become more liberal. Times changed, but Doris's films did not. Critics and comics dubbed Doris "the world's oldest virgin", and audiences began to shy away from her films. As a result, she slipped from the list of top box office stars, last appearing in the Top 10 in 1966 with the hit film *The Glass Bottom Boat*. One of the roles she turned down was that of the iconic Mrs. Robinson in *The Graduate*, a role that eventually went to Anne Bancroft. Her final feature film, *With Six You Get Eggroll*, was released in 1968.

Doris Day had continued to make albums too but again musical tastes were changing following the impact of the Beatles and the other groups. *The Love Album* was made in 1967 but sadly was not released until 1994 which is a pity because it contained some great versions of standard songs.

Her husband, Marty Melcher died in 1968 and Doris discovered that he and his business partner Jerome Bernard Rosenthal had squandered her earnings in a bunch of dodgy investments leaving her deeply in debt. She found that she had been signed up to do a TV series too! Doris did the TV show for 5 years and it did very well in the USA although it was not shown in the UK.

The TV show put her finances back in order and in 1974 she was awarded \$22 million in damages against Rosenthal who had lost her money for her. She only collected a small percentage of this but even so the need to work had passed. She virtually retired from show business and devoted her time to pet charities.

I always wished that she had toured and given concerts but apparently live performing was not for her. She would have drawn huge audiences.

She got married again in 1976 to Barry Comden (12 years younger than her). Comden was the *maitre d'hôtel* at one of Doris's favorite restaurants. Knowing of her great love of dogs, Comden endeared himself to her by giving her a bag of meat scraps and bones on her way out of the restaurant. Sadly the marriage did not last and when it unraveled, Comden complained that Doris cared more for her "animal friends" than she did for him.

In 1986 she hosted a TV show which highlighted her love of animals but it only lasted a year.

Doris's son Terry, was a musician and record producer, who produced The Byrds' innovative hits "Mr Tambourine Man" and "Turn! Turn! Turn!" and he also did groundbreaking work with the Beach Boys. He was also known for his brief association with Charles Manson, a songwriter and cult leader who was later convicted of several murders. After Marty Melcher's death, Terry became an Executive Producer of his mother's TV shows. He remained close to his mother until his own death in 2004 at the age of 62 after a long battle with melanoma.

In 2011, Doris released an album of songs called "My Heart" mainly taken from her TV series and incredibly it went into the album charts. She celebrated her 97th

birthday a few weeks before she died and our honorary member Michael Feinstein entertained at her party. Michael said of the occasion, "I feel supremely lucky that I got the opportunity to meet Doris earlier this year, when she asked me to sing for her 97th birthday party. There are moments in your life that you cherish and carry with you forever. That afternoon with her was one of those moments."



With Michael Feinstein a few weeks before she died.

During her career, she had a "girl next door" image but proved that she was capable of delivering comedy, romance as well as heavy drama. She appeared in 39 films, released 29 albums, spent 460 weeks in the Top 40 charts and became one of America's most beloved entertainers.

The connection with Mr. Crosby? Bing guested on three of Bob Hope's radio shows between 1948 and 1950 when Doris was the resident singer. I can't see that they sang together but they did take part in sketches in conjunction with Bob Hope. Increasingly Doris suffered from stage fright and perhaps that was a factor for not appearing on Bing's radio shows but she did guest on the Kraft Music Hall when Al Jolson was the host in 1948 and 1949. So why didn't Bing and Doris work together more? They would have made a great partnership. Perhaps the answer lies in the suggestion that she may have played a part in Marty Melcher divorcing Patty Andrews before going on to marry Doris. It could be that Bing did not want to upset Patty so he avoided working with Doris. Pure conjecture by your editor but Bing worked with virtually every top girl singer and Doris is a very notable absentee from the list.

Tim Conway, the American comedic actor, writer and director died on May 14 at the age of 85. He came to fame as the inept Ensign Parker in the 1960s World War II situation comedy *McHale's Navy* and went on to be a regular cast member on *The Carol Burnett Show*. He co-starred with Don Knotts in several films in the late 1970s and early 1980s, starred as the title character in the *Dorf* series of comedy films, and provided the voice of Barnacle Boy in the animated series *SpongeBob SquarePants*. He first worked with Bing on the Hollywood Palace show of September 18, 1965 taking part in a sketch with him.



Bing and Tim on the Hollywood Palace Show of September 18, 1965.

They met up again on the Hollywood Palace show of January 14, 1967 when Conway did a monologue about racing car drivers. Their final meeting was on the Flip Wilson Show of March 16, 1972 when Bing was in a sketch with Flip and Tim Conway in which Bing played a plumber visiting a burger bar.

Motion Picture Relief Fund Testimonial to

Bing Crosby



his is to express our appreciation and our gratitude for the unselfish service you contributed in behalf of your Motion Picture Relief Fund on the broadcast of February 5, 1939 over the Columbia Transcontinental Network from Hollywood, California.

Board of Directors Motion Picture Relief Fund

by *Jean Hersholt*
President

The Way We Were

The section of the magazine where we look at what Bing was doing in years gone by.

100 YEARS AGO

Harry Crosby (who had turned 16 on May 3) was continuing his studies at Gonzaga High School and was a member of the Junior Yard Association baseball team. Prior to Commencement day on June 19, he had achieved a distinction in Elocution and a merit in the Senior Academics Debating Society.



Bing is circled.

75 YEARS AGO

On May 1, 1944, Bing commenced filming *Here Come the Waves* with Betty Hutton and Sonny Tufts. Filming continued until June. He had to fit his radio shows and his recording activities around his movie commitments. In the three months until the end of July, he hosted thirteen Kraft Music Hall show with guests such as Bob Hope, Gene Kelly, Roy Rogers, Keenan Wynn, Jack Carson, Cecil B. DeMille, Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, George Murphy and Sonny Tufts. In addition, he appeared in eleven shows for the AFRS (Command Performance, Mail Call and GI Journal) with stars like Frank Sinatra, Betty Hutton, Jack Benny, Lena Horne, Jimmy Durante and Judy Garland.

In the same period, he took part in nine recording sessions which produced 27 tracks. From May 1 until the end of August, he had four songs which topped the Billboard charts.

His film *Going My Way* had its world premiere at the Paramount, New York, on May 3 and was held over for ten weeks. It went on to be the top box office attraction of 1944 in the USA taking \$6.5 million in rental income in its initial release period. It completed its record breaking run at the New York Paramount on July 11 where it had been seen by 1,010,000 people who paid a total of \$847,000 to watch it. The critics



With Judy Garland and Frank Sinatra.

loved the film with Bosley Crowther of *The New York Times* saying:

Having hit about as high in his profession as any average man would hope to hit—and that is to say the top notes in the musical comedy league—Bing Crosby has switched his batting techniques (or had it switched for him) in his latest film, *Going My Way*. And—would you believe it?—old Bing is giving the best show of his career. That's saying a lot for a performer who has been one of the steadiest joys of the screen. But, in this Leo McCarey film, now at the Paramount, he has definitely found his sturdiest role to date.

(Bosley Crowther, *The New York Times*, May 3, 1944)

Apart from the activity already listed, most weekends Bing either went to Army camps to entertain or he took part in exhibition golf matches to help Bond sales. He, Bob Hope, and Dinah Shore took part in the "I Am an American Day" celebrations at the Civic Auditorium, San Francisco, and the proceedings were broadcast. During their time in San Francisco, Bing and Dinah visited Letterman General Hospital and spent time with the patients. He also headlined two shows at the Hollywood Bowl, filmed a cameo appearance in Bob Hope's film *The Princess and the Pirate*, and played a major part in launching the Fifth War Loan.

Early in August, Bing joined Overseas Unit #329 of the USO in San Francisco for an overseas trip to entertain the troops. The unit also included comedian Joe De Rita, singer Jeannie Darrell (formerly one of the Music Maids), dancer Darlene Garner, guitarist Buck Harris, and Earl Baxter (accordion). Bing fronted a show for the patients at the Oakland Naval Hospital as a try-out for the show he and his troupe were to present overseas. After the show, Bing visited the hospital wards.

They travelled to New York and boarded the converted liner "Ile De France" bound for Europe. On August 25, Bing arrived in Greenock, Scotland. He had given four shows a day to the troops on board during the trip.

Crosby worked harder than anybody; he endeared himself to everyone aboard the ship. He was miserably, agonizingly seasick through most of the crossing; nevertheless he insisted on putting on four one-hour shows a day so that all the troops could be entertained, 2500 at a time—a gruelling schedule for any entertainer, even one who could keep his lunch down, which Crosby could not, as a rule. He could have made it easier on himself; the ship's officers who got three meals a day and had a very pleasant private wardroom to eat them in, sympathetically invited Crosby to join them, but he declined. If two meals a day in the mess hall were all the fighting men got, he said mildly, then that would be good enough for him, and he took his green-faced place in the shuffling queue with the troops. He did not spurn the officers' hospitality entirely; the ship's officers had liquor, which the troops did not, and Crosby could occasionally be prevailed upon to join the officers for a single highball in the evening. But then he invariably made it a point to leave shortly before 11 o'clock in order to spend an informal hour with Captain Lauder's Coast Guard gunners as they changed the watch, amiably chatting and joking, and agreeably singing any nostalgic old song that anyone asked for.

(Don Stanford, *The Ile de France*)

The troupe travelled on to London where Bing took part in the popular *Variety Bandbox* radio show at Queensberry All-Services Club with Tommy Handley. Bing gave a show afterwards for an audience of 4,000 in which he duetted with Anne Shelton on "Easter Parade." He went on to Kettner's Restaurant in Soho and had to sing "Pennies from Heaven" to the crowd outside to get them to disperse.



Entertaining at the Stage Door Canteen.

He took part in several other shows whilst in London including the Allied Expeditionary Forces program from the BBC's Paris Cinema. with George Melachrino and the British band of the AEF on August 30, and another live broadcast the next day for the Allied

Expeditionary Forces program with Glenn Miller and his American Band of the AEF, again from the Paris Cinema. On August 31, he also recorded three 15-minute programs for broadcast to Germany from ABSIE (American Broadcasting Station in Europe) in London. Speaking phonetic German, he was given a new nickname by Bob Musel of *Variety* magazine – *Der Bingle*. Later that evening Bing participated in the opening of the Stage Door Canteen at 210 Piccadilly, with Bea Lillie, Jack Buchanan, and Fred Astaire. The event was captured on film by various newsreels.

Soon he would be off to France...

50 YEARS AGO

Bing, Kathryn and the children were at their home in Las Cruces, Mexico for his 66th birthday and it was not until June 6, 1969 that they flew home to San Francisco. Then it was down to Los Angeles to work on the NBC television show *Goldilocks*. The soundtrack was recorded on June 16 with location work for the television show subsequently filmed at Coldwater Canyon. The program was eventually shown on March 31, 1970. Work on the production had finished by June 20 and they all returned home.



At work on Goldilocks.

Within days, Kathryn and Mary Frances departed for Corning, New York where they were to appear in the play *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. Bing took Harry and Nathaniel to the Rising River Ranch in Northern California.

The play *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* moved on to Denver and Bing arrived unexpectedly on July

11 to see the performance. He also joined in the impromptu party thrown for him by the cast. Bing then flew to Iceland to make an *American Sportsman* program about Atlantic salmon on the Laxa River with Bud Boyd (the fishing editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle*). The program was shown on February 8, 1970. From Iceland, Bing travelled to London arriving on July 24. Kathryn joined him the next day and they stayed at the Connaught Hotel. After several days in London, they flew to Athens, Greece, where they visited the Acropolis.

On July 30, Bing and Kathryn arrived in Nairobi, Kenya after an eventful flight when one of the plane's engines had caught fire. That night they stayed at the Norfolk Hotel before leaving for a two week safari with professional hunter Terry Mathews and his wife plus Bing's friends Mr. and Mrs. George Coleman. This was Bing's third safari.

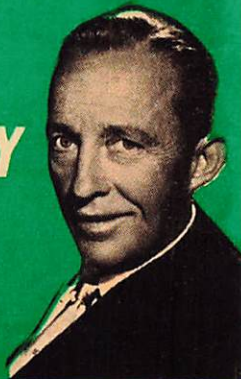
Subsequently on August 16, Bing and Kathryn flew from Nairobi to Rome in Italy, arriving at 2 a.m. on a Sunday morning. Their vaccination certificates had been mislaid and they were both vaccinated against smallpox again at the airport. After an extended tour of the Vatican, the Crosbys drove to Porto Ercole in Tuscany to relax at the home of some American friends. Bing's needless vaccination had reacted violently and he was running a fever. The following Sunday, Bing and Kathryn flew home via New York ready for some forthcoming television work.

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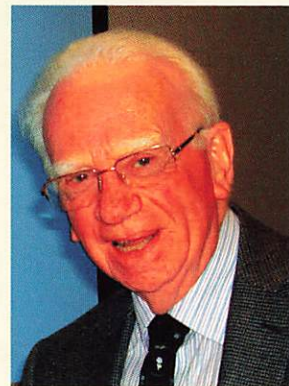
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KEEPING TRACK

RICHARD BAKER BRINGS US UP-TO-DATE



At last we have a few discs to spin. May it continue, even if none can be placed in the “must have” lists.

Compact Discs

Bing Crosby Sings The Great American Songbook

Not Now Music NOT2CD740-1/2.

Around \$14 (US) £6 (UK)

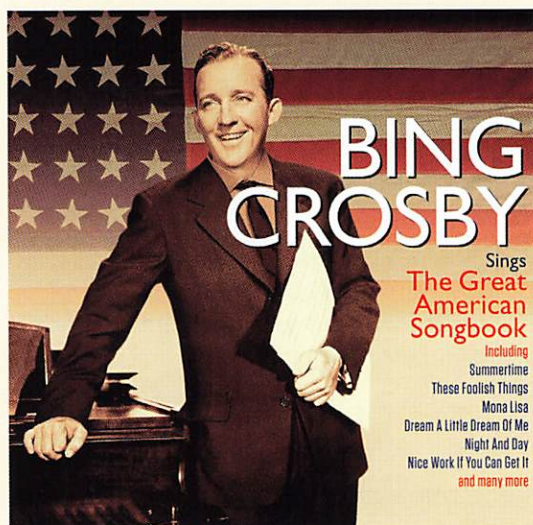
Disc 1

1. Dream a Little Dream of Me (a) / 2. These Foolish Things (1944 L3707-A) / 3. I've Got You Under My Skin (1947 L4731-A) / 4. Jeepers Creepers (b) / 5. Cheek To Cheek (b) / 6. Nice Work If You Can Get It (b) / 7. Ain't Misbehavin' (c) / 8. Have You Met Miss Jones? (b) / 9. September in the Rain (b) / 10. I Can't Give You Anything But Love (d) / 11. 'Deed I Do (b) / 12. Night and Day (1944 L3316-A) / 13. So in Love (1949 L4856-A) / 14. Exactly Like You (a) / 15. Imagination (1947 L4732-A) / 16. Whispering (a) / 17. Paper Doll (c) / 18. Dinah (d) / 19. Embraceable You (1947 L4551-A) / 20. Sweet Georgia Brown (1932 JC8592-B)

Disc 2

1. Just One of Those Things (1945 L3725-A) / 2. Summertime (1938 DLA1310-A) / 3. How About You (with Rosemary Clooney from “Fancy Meeting You Here”) / 4. Begin the Beguine (1944 L3411-A) / 5. They Can't Take That Away From Me (1947 L4553-A) / 6. The Song Is You (b) / 7. Blue Skies (1946 L4230-A) / 8. Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive (with The Andrews Sisters) (1944 L3685-A) / 9. Ol' Man River (d) / 10. It's the Talk of the Town (1945 L3938-A) / 11. Mona Lisa (c) / 12. Blues in the Night (c) / 13. All Through the Night (1956 L8991) / 14. I Got Plenty O' Nuttin' (1936 DLA324-A) / 15. Sweet Lorraine (1945 L3953-A) / 16. All by Myself (1946 L4229-A) / 17. But Beautiful (1947 L4556-A) / 18. How Deep Is the Ocean (1932 B12472-A) / 19. I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter (a) / 20. After You've Gone (d)

- (a) = with Bob Scobey's Frisco Jazz Band from “Bing with a Beat” album 1957 (Mono version)
- (b) = with Buddy Bregman and His Orchestra from “Bing Sings Whilst Bregman Swings” album 1956
- (c) = with Jack Pleis Orchestra from “Songs I Wish I Had Sung (The First Time Around)” album 1956
- (d) = with Buddy Cole and His Trio from radio



Sometimes it seems to me that the world is swimming with cheap(ish) compilations of Bing. Most of them can safely be ignored as they merely contain permutations drawn from the same old top 50 or so successes, thrown thoughtlessly together. This 2CD compilation starts off with a favourable impression by avoiding that approach and follows the theme suggested by the title though it is unfortunate that this is confusing as it is the same title as the issue from Bing Crosby Enterprises of 2010 (was it really so long ago?). Bing makes his way through the songs from some of the more prominent writers of the “golden era” – Berlin, Porter, Gershwin, Mercer, Kern, together with a few of the slightly less well known – Lane, Freed, Parrish et al, but all of whom had a considerable output of memorable songs. The selection is enjoyable but does seem to have been drawn from a limited range of sources, weighted heavily in favour of the albums noted. Audio quality is quite good though some tweaking has been applied to the upper register for some of the older tracks whilst the general recording level is very high. However the issue is let down very badly by the notes

which are barely readable against the background, but that hardly matters because they tell us nothing whatever about the songs or the accompanists (except the mention of the two tracks with other vocalists). Even though recording years are given they are mostly wrong! Instead we get a rather elementary essay which attempts to make connections between Bing and the various songwriters. So a passable effort at selection of songs but an abysmal effort so far as information is concerned. Presentation is in a variant of a three panel Digi-pak with the CDs held in card slits instead of plastic hubs. I fear that there is not much here for the dyed-in-the-wool enthusiast apart from the interest in hearing some tracks in an unusual sequence, but it would be a good step for “newbies” taking steps beyond the best known hits.

Bing Crosby (Mack The Knife – Stardust)

Le Chant Du Monde 274 2985/6 (#36 in series “La Voix des Géants” collection).

Around \$6 (US) £10 (UK)

Disc 1 “Mack The Knife”

1. Mack the Knife / 2. Along the Way to Waikiki / 3. Whispering [1-3 (a)] / 4. Mountain Greenery / 5. Have You Met Miss Jones? / 6. Cheek to Cheek / 7. September in the Rain / 8. Heat Wave / 9. They All Laughed / 10. Nice Work If You Can Get It / 11. The Song Is You / 12. ‘Deed I Do / 13. I’ve Got Five Dollars / 14. Jeepers, Creepers / 15. The Blue Room [4-15 (b)] / 16. Beyond the Reef (1950 L5816-A) / 17. La Vie En Rose (1950 L5697-A) / 18. Jamboree Jones (1950 W76114-A) / 19. The Dixieland Band (1950 W76113-A) / 20. White Christmas (1947 L4374-A)

(a) = with Bob Scobey’s Frisco Jazz Band from “Bing with a Beat” album 1957 (Mono version)

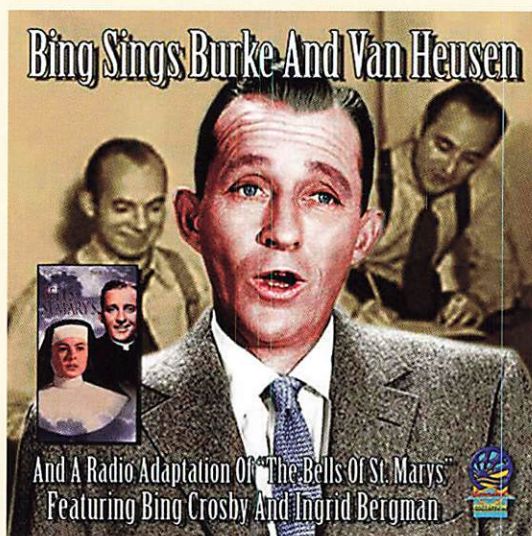
(b) = with Buddy Bregman and His Orchestra from “Bing Sings Whilst Bregman Swings” album (1956)

Disc 2 “Stardust”

Disc 2 entirely with Buddy Cole and His Trio from “A Musical Autobiography” 1954

1. Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams / 2. Just One More Chance / 3. Sweet and Lovely / 4. Thanks / 5. Mississippi Mud / 6. I Surrender, Dear / 7. Black Moonlight / 8. The Day You Came Along / 9. Temptation / 10. May I? / 11. Love in Bloom / 12. It’s Easy to Remember / 13. I Wished On the Moon / 14. Sweet Leilani / 15. Blue Hawaii / 16. Out of Nowhere / 17. Stardust / 18. Soon / 19. There’s a Goldmine in the Sky / 20. Only Forever

An issue from France in a series entitled “The Voice of the Giants” no less. With a few exceptions all tracks are drawn from 1954-57 with the complete “Bing Sings, Bregman Swings” album, three tracks from “Bing with a Beat” and the bulk of the remainder from the Musical Autobiography album, shorn of the verbal introductions (editing which shows up in some places). It will immediately be obvious that there is a lot of duplication with the album covered above. I would certainly not think that the selection could ever be regarded as a fair representation as a “Voice of the Giants”. It looks as if great chunks were cut from three albums from 1954-57 and some random extras horned in. For all that the tracks are well recorded and this is an alternative source for the Bregman album. On the plus side accurate and comprehensive information is given and a translation of the original French notes is included though the translation is stilted and flowery – “--- began a career as an actor who will bring him the consecration”. The set comes in a three panel Digi-pak with some nice illustrations and an eight page booklet.



Bing Crosby Sings Burke and Van Heusen – Sounds of Yesteryear – \$16.69 (Amazon.com)

1. Humpty Dumpty Heart 2. Ain’t Got a Dime to My Name 3. Moonlight Becomes You 4. Sunday, Monday or Always (with the AFRS Orchestra, Treasury Star Parade) 5. If You Please 6. It Could Happen to You 7. Swinging on a Star 8. The Day After Forever 9. Going My Way 10. Welcome to My Dream 11. Put It There, Pal (with Bob Hope) 12. Road to Morocco (with Bob Hope) 13. Yah-Ta-Ta, Yah-Ta-Ta (with Judy Garland) 14. Aren’t You Glad You’re You? 15. Personality 16. But Beautiful (radio broadcast) 17. You Don’t Have to Know the Language (with The Andrews Sisters) 18. Apalachicola, FLA (with The Andrews Sisters) 19. To See You Is to Love You (radio broadcast) 20. “The Bells of St. Mary’s” (a radio adaptation of the movie, Screen Guild Theatre, August 26th 1946)

I have not had chance to acquire this CD yet but Sounds of Yesteryear have done well in the past with this type of issue, mixing radio and studio performances, the familiar with well-chosen less familiar

items, and I look forward to it. They are all commercial recordings except where marked. Interesting to see that the radio adaptation of “The Bells of St. Mary’s” is included.

**COMING
SOON**

By the time you read this, a CD entitled “**Bing Crosby – Immersed in Mr Mercer’s Verse**” should be available, also from Sounds of Yesteryear. The advance publicity states: “Many of the songs listed are from rare radio transcriptions and they are notable for the inclusion of duets with Johnny Mercer, Connie Boswell, Mary Martin, Jack Teagarden, The Andrews Sisters, Louis Armstrong, Jane Wyman. The songs cover a fairly long period of time from 1936 to 1953 and showcase the inventiveness and humour of Johnny Mercer which the listener can hear develop over time.”

DVDs and BLU-RAY

Going My Way 75th Anniversary Blu-ray Edition

Shout Factory has announced that it will celebrate the 75th anniversary of *Going My Way* with a Blu-ray release, on September 24th. As yet no further details are available.

There now appear to be two versions of *Stagecoach* on Blu-ray. The first is a "limited edition" of 3000 units from Twilight Time said to be region free which includes an isolated music track and audio commentary with film historians Lee Pfeiffer and Paul Scrabo. This was released in April at a list price of \$29.95 but there seem to be limited outlets for it. One is <https://www.twilighttimemovies.com>.

The second is from Signal One Entertainment, said to be region B/2, around £20/ \$16.

The Internet

I have written here before that sales of CDs have fallen dramatically. Initially this was blamed on the increase in downloads but such is the pace of change that downloading is now thought old-fashioned by many, and it has been replaced by streaming. The form of delivery has changed but the hardware has also changed in extraordinary ways. Not only can we use computers but also smartphones, a variety of music devices, smart speakers and dedicated multi – room music streamers to feed into HiFi systems and speakers. As we are moving into a world with fewer opportunities to acquire the music of our choice on CD we will necessarily have to rely more and more on digital alternatives. Whilst many readers will know and understand what I am talking about, I know that some get a little lost by such concepts so perhaps I should just pause to draw the distinction between "download" and "stream". Downloading is the physical transfer of the music file: the file becomes yours and resides in the permanent memory of your phone, computer or other device, so takes up space, which is finite, and ultimately you might run out of space. Downloads can be accomplished very quickly – provided Internet connections are good, you might download a complete CD in a matter of seconds. Streaming on the other hand is playing the music "live" in real time. It can take many forms, including live radio, but what I intend to cover here relates to streaming services where you can select from a library of tracks and play your own selections. The files remain with the provider. There are some downsides to this – sometimes providers remove tracks from their library so a favourite song could vanish, and you have to maintain a good open connection over the Internet during the whole of any time that you are listening. Some Internet Service Providers might impose limits on overall Internet usage, which will limit streaming time available to you.

When such services started some were operating on the fringe of (or outside) the law but I believe that all those I have listed are signed up to all relevant copyright agreements and pay royalties where appropriate.

There are a surprising number of streaming services but those that I have examined share a common structure, offering the ability to select individual tracks or whole CDs, build play lists that you compile from the library, which you can save and play in the selected or random order. The service will suggest other tracks or artists that you might be interested in based on your selections and on the selections of other subscribers with similar tastes. All offer search engines to find artists and songs by name though some come up with rather odd results and I found a lot of duplication of tracks. Some will allow you to see playlists of selected "friends" who subscribe to the same service.

The main streaming services internationally are Amazon, Apple, Deezer, Google (now rebranded as YouTube Music) and Spotify, whilst in the US there is additionally Pandora. There are others, some based locally and some tending to specialise in specific genres. For our purposes the list above probably goes far enough for the present. Microsoft used to offer a service but so far as I can make out Microsoft have linked in some way with Spotify.

Providers all seem to charge UK users the same in pounds as US users pay in dollars – so the exchange rate for this purpose is par and pricing patterns are extraordinarily similar between providers, typically being \$9.99 (£9.99) for individual membership and \$14.99 (£14.99) for family membership, usually allowing six users (Google and Apple ten), each of whom can set up their own play list. Some offer "Hi Fi" options with higher bit rates in theory giving better quality sound. Deezer for example charge at \$19.99 (£19.99) for their Hi Fi option but I doubt whether many will notice much difference unless listening to very modern recordings on the best Hi Fi equipment. Some have discounts for such things as annual payments/ students etc.

Prices can vary if you have bought devices or other services from the providers (Amazon offers \$2/£2 off if you already subscribe to Amazon Prime) and all have introductory offers in some form, typically a three months free but all ask for credit card details for automatic activation at the end of the free period – if you wish to terminate at the end of the free period you need to take positive steps.

Deezer, Spotify and Pandora are the only services to offer a no strings free service but you get advertising inserted between tracks at intervals. Their premium services banish the advertising and you also get a higher bit rate.

All those that I looked at in any detail also offer download alternatives at additional costs but some allow a limited number within the basic package.

All make claims of millions of tracks, mostly well in excess of 40 million, but I am doubtful that this can be taken to mean “different” as so many tracks recur on different “virtual” CDs and it is noticeable that some state “songs”, others “tracks, though I am uncertain if the subtle distinction is intended. Spotify, Deezer and Apple appear to me to be the main contenders for Crosby material, offering all the more recent issues from Bing Crosby Enterprises as well as much older material as well as very large numbers of compilations.

Most sites are very simple to navigate but perhaps the most straightforward are the purely streaming ones, with Apple, Amazon and Google (each of whom have many other things to sell) less so and in comparison with others I found the Apple site rather complex. Searches can be a bit hit and miss – a search for “Bing Sings whilst Bregman Swings” on Spotify produces multiple versions of the Bregman CD but also of “Fancy Meeting You Here”. They are not alone in such matters. Much of the detailed tagging is deficient – often additional performers are omitted and there were several instances of (e.g.) Bing and the Andrews Sisters being shown as one or the other but not both. I found several instances of classical music with incorrect tags, typically with music identified as the preceding (or succeeding) piece.

Personally I would advocate an initial exploration of Deezer and Spotify, using their free services-with-advertising. Spotify has a marginally clearer layout whilst Deezer appears to me to have a slightly more accurate search engine. The commercials will ultimately annoy though they are limited to 30 seconds or so once every five or six tracks. Apart from the content of the commercials themselves they all seem to be at a considerably increased volume compared to the wanted music. Once you are immersed in the service and have an idea of strengths and weaknesses compared to your own musical tastes you can explore other offerings to establish a match.

Summary of main providers, costs and services:

Amazon Music Unlimited and Prime Music – 7.99 per month.

A 30-day free trial is available. Amazon Music Unlimited is a “standalone” service while Prime Music is the version included with an Amazon Prime membership. Amazon Music Unlimited comes with 40 million songs whilst Amazon Prime Music is a service with two million songs, available through an Amazon Prime subscription (which includes other benefits – the Music part should be regarded as part only of a much larger whole). Amazon has a new free tier but it is only available when used on an Echo Smart Speaker, and includes adverts. You cannot search for individual songs, but instead must stick to playlists from Amazon. Frankly I find some aspects of Amazon’s pricing difficult to understand.

Apple Music – 9.99 per month

45 million songs. It also comes with a three month free trial on most iPhones, and some other Apple products but otherwise no free trial is offered. Apple use their own coding system of 256kbps AAC. Family, 14.99 for up to six accounts, student, 4.99. Discounts for annual payments

Deezer – Free (with advertising) or 9.99 per month

53 million tracks. Hi Fi option 19.99 (Flac), family 14.99 (6 profiles). A 30-day premium free trial available. It appears that there is some restriction on freedom of choice on mobile devices using the free option, with play lists only being available.

Pandora (USA only) has a different service structure at its cheaper levels. It is free (with advertising) but the free service is based on play lists created from their selections of the type or of the artists you specify. To remove advertising, the subscription is \$4.99 a month (Pandora Plus), and \$9.99 (Pandora Premium) if you wish to search for and compile play lists of your own specific tracks. Pandora Premium therefore offers essentially the same service as the competitors.

Spotify – Free (with advertising) or 9.99 per month. Family, 14.99, for up to five members. Student, 4.99.

35 million songs. Possibly the first and I believe still the largest with claims of nearly 100 million subscribers.

YouTube Music (Ex Google Play) 9.99 per month.

YouTube Music replaces Google Play. YouTube offers a free version of its app, but only if you own a Google Home Smart Speaker. This version lets users play a sample of playlists using their voice to activate them. The free version has adverts in between songs, but the premium version is advert-free. In addition to the streaming service you download or upload up to 50,000 songs. (I assume that the uploads are subject to some form of monitoring to ensure copyright compliance). A 30-day free trial available.

This is by no means an exclusive list but most of those that I have passed over tend to specialise in specific musical genres or interest groups. However I would also point to BingCrosby.com which streams “Bing Crosby Radio”, featuring mainly radio or selections from their CDs on a regularly changing loop. This is material they choose - you cannot select in any way. My thanks to David Lobosco for his assistance. I must make the point that this is a rapidly changing world and I would not be surprised if some of this information becomes incorrect in a short time.

Richard Baker

bakerstonb@gmail.com

Bing Crosby
Hollywood

Hillsborough
December 18, 1968

Dear Bert:

Although I'm sure this letter will cause you some disappointment, I have no other alternative just now.

I'm afraid I won't be able to get away for the banquet up there in January. Because of the musicians' strike, recently settled, a lot of work I had programmed was set back, and now they are trying to re-schedule it - and along with the other things listed for that month, I'm afraid it's going to be a pretty busy period.

Bert, I'm wondering if our golf tournament charity fund can't be of some assistance to you, in connection with the maintenance, operation of some of the Boys Clubs up there that you're connected with.

We make quite a few grants in the direction of this type of activity.

If you could write me a letter, indicating something that is needed up there, in a Two or Three Thousand Dollar price range, I'll see if I can get the Committee to approve of the grant. I believe I would be successful.

It certainly appears that you are deserving of high commendation for the years of effort you've put in in behalf of the projects up there, and I want to add my thanks to the other you are doubtless receiving -

Always your friend,

Bing
Bing Crosby

BC:lm
Mr. Bert McMurtrie
4210 North 34th Street
Tacoma, Washington



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